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The Shape of Things

THE RHETORIC OF THE OLD-TIME REVIVAL was mingled with the enthusiasm of a party convention in the meeting of the Young Democrats at Pittsburgh. Senator Josh Lee of Oklahoma declared, "Now is the time to unleash the devil dogs of democracy and set them baying on the Wolf of Wall Street." Paul V. McNutt spoke on "The Meaning of Modern Liberalism," and if the Strong Man of Terre Haute added a little to the confusion already surrounding the term "liberalism," he did show the direction in which the wind is blowing for 1940. When the Kellys, the McNutts, and the Lees are a-whoopin' and a-hollerin' on the Roosevelt band-wagon, one can feel sure that the country is not yet ready for an open turn to the right, and will vote a conservative into office only if he is disguised to look like a liberal. The President, in his own message to the Young Democrats, warned that he would not support the party if it nominated "conservative candidates, or lip-service candidates, on a straddlebug platform." The Young Democrats obviously want Roosevelt for a third term. The danger, if Roosevelt does not run, is that the New Dealers themselves may fall for a "lip-service candidate." We mention no names, but several of them spoke at the Young Democratic convention.

THE SO-CALLED CHRISTIAN MOBILIZERS, AN offshoot of the Coughlin-inspired Christian Front, have moved on to the second stage of their campaign to bring Nazi technique to the sidewalks of New York. Up to a few days ago the Coughlin followers were content to preach race hate in public and at least make a show of doing their stabbing and brawling behind the backs of the police. They have now entered on a program of public rioting and violence. Not satisfied with beating up a heckler at a "Buy Christian" street meeting, the Mobilizers attacked those who objected to the assault and wound up by slashing the face of a police sergeant and cracking the jaw of the police captain who dispersed the meeting because of the "unruliness of the crowd." Two of the Mobilizers were arrested on the spot, and three others were taken in when a mob of 2,000 held an im-

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promptu meeting outside the station house. A strong dose of antiseptic publicity seems to have induced a temporary mildness in Father Coughlin, who has devoted his last two speeches to the farm problem and the virtues of the A. F. of L., but the bitter fruits of his planting are now being gathered in. The editors of the Catholic weekly *America* upbraided us a few weeks ago for criticizing the failure of "the cops of New York, God bless them" to nip this thing in the bud. Now that the police are doing their duty—there has been a marked improvement all around in their handling of the problem—will the editors of *America* continue to bless them and to insist that an attack on Coughlin is an attack on Catholicism? Or will they agree that a person who drops poison in reservoirs is eventually going to be guilty of an unpleasant crime?

*

M-DAY TAKES ON A STARTLING AND VIVID reality with the appointments announced by the War and Navy departments to the new War Resources Board, and the time for labor and progressive opinion to make itself felt is now, not when and if hostilities begin. For this is a board made up entirely of representatives of big business and their academic mouthpieces. Edward R. Stettinius, Jr., chairman of the board of the United States Steel Corporation, has been named chairman of the War Resources Board. The others appointed are Dr. Karl T. Compton, president of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Walter S. Gifford, head of the American Telephone and Telegraph Company; John Lee Pratt, director of General Motors; General Robert E. Wood, chairman of Sears, Roebuck; and Harold G. Moulton, president of the Brookings Institution. Those who will do the work and fight the battles have no voice on the board; only those who will make the profits are represented.

*

NOTHING COULD DO MORE TO UNDERMINE the Administration's foreign policy than the $13,750,000 cotton credit it has just extended to Franco through the Export-Import Bank. How can Mr. Roosevelt aspire to be the leader of the democratic forces against the axis when he rushes forward to bolster up its Spanish puppet? Our embargo, dutifully imposed at the request of the Catholic church and the British Foreign Office, helped to kill the Spanish Republic, and our money is now to give Franco support at a time when internal unrest and dissension are weakening his regime. The Administration is anxious to keep fascist influences out of Latin America —but steps forward to give financial support to Franco's Spain, the bridge over which the axis powers hope to reach the Spanish-speaking sections of the Western Hemisphere. This policy makes no sense whatever. Is the loan the work of Franco's Wall Street sympathizers or of the well-intrenched Catholic influences in the State Department? Or is this another piece of cooperation with British "appeasement"?

*

NO ONE—NOT EVEN HENRY G. ALSBERG—has been told exactly why Mr. Alsberg was discharged from the position of director of the WPA Writers' Project. Vague charges of inefficiency were rumored, but not preferred or officially admitted. A considerable public would like to have the facts and have them straight. The dismissal looks too much like a living sacrifice on the altar of Messrs. Dies and Woodrum and the red-baiting forces they represent. Henry Alsberg is no Communist. On the contrary, he has defended freedom of speech and the right of active political opposition against all comers, including the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. But his libertarian beliefs work both ways. As director of the Writers' Project Mr. Alsberg refused to fire workers just because they were radicals—of whatever brand. As a consequence he was himself subjected to unsubstantiated and false accusations of Communist activity in the relief investigation of last May. And now he has been dismissed. He leaves a legacy of which any administrator might be proud. Some 321 publications have emerged from his project, including about 100 books; the state guides alone would justify the project. At this moment 128 publications are on the presses of various publishing houses, and sixty-eight more are almost ready to go to press. For months to come the project will be able to coast along on the work already done under Mr. Alsberg's direction. What will happen at the end of that time remains to be seen. But many millions of citizens in every state will be watching carefully.

*

IT WILL TAKE WISER HEADS THAN WE HAVE to understand just what the Pope meant in the letter which Cardinal Maglione has sent to Canada. The heart of the letter is in this passage: "Not syndicalism and collaboration of the classes, or the corporative organization, or, in short, a healthy nationalism and a patriotic national education can realize social peace in justice, or the peace of nations, so long as sacrifice is excluded and only strict legality seeks to triumph." It is true that His Holiness is still in large part Mussolini's prisoner and must speak cautiously, even as any other Italian. The passage might be interpreted as approving the corporative state, and the reference to "strict legality" as indorsing axis claims to colonies and *Lebensraum*. On the other hand, the New York *Times* correspondent in Rome finds by implication that this is really an indorsement of democracy, since the Pope is saying that even the corporative state cannot realize "social peace in justice" without sacrifice. If it is an indorsement of democracy,

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it seems rather round-about. His Holiness also seems to think that the fascist powers should do less "demanding," the democratic powers more "renouncing." "More renouncing" spells more Munichs to us. The Vatican's foreign policy remains mysterious; and its weight seems to be thrown in the present European crisis on the side of more "renouncing" on the part of Poland for the benefit of Germany. The fact that Poland is devoutly Roman Catholic while the present German regime is violently anti-Catholic does not make the Vatican's position easier to understand.

*

NEW EVIDENCE OF THE ANTI-DEMOCRATIC instincts of those now ruling Britain's destinies comes with the decision of the Wholesale News Agents' Federation of England to cease handling the magazine *Time*. This "decision" hardly seems a voluntary one, since *Time* has been popular in England. Curiously enough the British action coincides with that taken by the Italian government, which has banned *Time* from Italy indefinitely because of an article in the issue of July 24 about Countess Edda Ciano, daughter of Mussolini and wife of Italy's Foreign Minister. The article was not unflattering, though it did say that Edda "wore the diplomatic trousers" in the Ciano family and enjoyed the fuss made over her in Nazi official and social circles. It described the Count, no doubt accurately, as "another of those golden lads who liked to hang around the Excelsior and Grand Hotel in Rome, where rich United States heiresses generally stayed." Mussolini's ban on *Time* is understandable; Il Duce followed this action with an order closing the United Press Bureau in Rome and expelling H. R. Ekins, its chief, because the United Press in London reported that Mussolini had had a heart attack. Italy is not a free country, but how free is England? Does the Duce's power extend so far that *Time* is forbidden in Britain as well as Italy? These are questions for English newspapers to answer—before they are gagged, too.

*

THE PHENOMENON OF FREE PEOPLE GOING voluntarily to live in Nazi Germany has startled many a theorist of the democracies. In the last year the Reich repatriated 30,443 Germans from all over the world; this year the monthly average so far has been 3,800 to 4,000, a majority of them German-Americans. After one year in Germany the Nazi government presses its repatriates to become German citizens once more. Now the American consulates in the Reich are being visited secretly by German-Americans who want to come back to the United States. All of them left the states because they wanted work, thus demonstrating the decisiveness of the job in the average man's life. They wanted work at any price. They got it, more work than they had ever dreamed of, ten, twelve hours a day. And wages too small to live on, let alone to save anything for the wives and children who, in most cases, fortunately were left behind. The promised wages were never forthcoming, and from the nominal wages 25 per cent was deducted for various taxes. Net earnings were just sufficient to keep the workers alive but not to keep them healthy. They could not get used to the food, mainly potatoes, to which the Nazis have conditioned their slaves. The material disappointment, however, is only one side of the picture. Consular officials are shocked by what they call the "German look" which the repatriated quickly acquire, the permanent look of fear. We hope that the American authorities will do everything in their power to hasten the return of the poor devils who in their desire for work tried out the Nazi "paradise." Those who are lucky enough to get back should provide a powerful antidote to the propaganda of the Nazis for a Germany where everyone has a job. But the more serious moral to be drawn from this story is an old one: unless the democracies put men back to work home-grown demagogues will eventually find the tools to construct a fascist "paradise" in America.

*

HAMILTON FISH, ARDENT ISOLATIONIST, IS scurrying about Europe, presumably to see how this country can best keep out of foreign entanglements. Judging from the comments he has been tossing back across the waters, however, we imagine that Mr. Fish has become fairly entangled in the process. He doesn't think a war is imminent, but he is "appalled by the war psychology" in Britain and France. Betraying the constructive hopes of their brave Munich days, these countries have abandoned themselves to "a defeatist attitude," looking toward a showdown with the dictators. Moreover, Mr. Fish thinks it is the "height of puerility and stupidity" for the United States to have no ambassador in Berlin "in the midst of this world crisis," and he takes umbrage at the objection of Assistant Secretary of State Grady to trading with the totalitarian nations. "They represent one-quarter of the civilized world," he insists; and "it is not their fault that they use the barter system that was forced upon them because they have no foreign exchange" (he did not say they had spent it all on blackjacks). Mr. Fish is still convinced that the United States should mind its own business. But if he were asked to arbitrate the Danzig problem, the Representative conceded, somewhat wistfully, he would do so gladly. And then just to show his qualifications for appeasement, he offered the opinion that "the great danger is that the Communists will provoke an incident in connection with Danzig to unleash war's furies." As we write, Mr. Fish is engaged in a talk with Foreign Minister von Ribbentrop, and he hopes after that to go over the ground with the Führer himself. We would prescribe for Mr. Fish a good dose of isolation.

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Crisis Without Climax

ANOTHER week-end has passed without Europe's crisis reaching a climax. There has been no relaxation of tension; the powder barrels are piling higher and higher at Danzig; the fuses are in position. But Hitler has not yet decided to apply the match, and there are indications that if he does take the risk of an explosion, the first blast may be heard in a different part of the continent.

As we go to press, attention is concentrated on the question of what happened at the three-day conference between Count Ciano and von Ribbentrop, in the course of which the Italian Foreign Minister also had an interview with Hitler. The official communiqués from Salzburg have been more than usually reticent, thus naturally encouraging rumors. The fact that the discussions were protracted and that the conferees had to forgo many of the social engagements which had been arranged for them suggests that the two ends of the axis were not in perfect alignment.

Reports from Rome indicate that Mussolini has been putting all possible pressure on Hitler to ward off any decisive action which might bring on war. That is perfectly understandable. Certainly the Italian people do not want to fight to obtain Danzig for Germany. In such a war Italy would have everything to lose and nothing to gain. In a conflict with the Western powers the southern part of the axis would be the flank most open to attack. Behind the *Westwall* Germany would probably be safe from invasion, and its greatest danger would come from blockade, which is a slow weapon. But Italy, despite boasts about the impregnability of its western Alpine defenses, might find its northern plains invaded by the French. Even more probable is the cutting of communications with its African colonies by the Anglo-French fleet and the bottling up of its own navy, leaving its immense coastline exposed.

To say that Mussolini is almost certainly striving to prevent war is not quite the same thing as suggesting that he has become a little angel of peace. No doubt he is willing to help his partner to another Munich, playing the same kind of role as he did last year. (This time, obviously, he is hoping to get the Pope's blessing.) He will be encouraged, no doubt, by an editorial in the London *Times* which, after praising him as a "consistent advocate of peaceful revision of treaties," went on to suggest that the axis powers would find a general readiness to confer among the states interested in a peace settlement provided that a prima facie case for modification of the status quo was made out and any changes made were the result of negotiations and not of force. The editorial reinforces Robert Dell's warning on another page that an effort to create another Munich cannot be ruled out.

Such an outcome of the crisis, however, would only be possible if Poland could be induced to capitulate without firing a shot, and at present there is no sign that this will happen. Under these circumstances it may be necessary for Hitler to divert attention from Danzig by a move toward bloodless victory elsewhere. Through the heavy filter paper of censorship some drops of news have lately trickled from the Danubian countries hinting of developments in that region. There are signs of increased pressure on Hungary, where a feudal-minded government is trying to combine a policy of subservience to Germany internationally with suppression of its domestic Nazis. Its antipathy to the latter is due to their advocacy of land reform, which would destroy the economic basis of the Magyar ruling class. In order to preserve at least part of their power the Horthy-Teleki clique would probably be willing enough to make a deal with Hitler which would turn Hungary into a German protectorate but leave them in local command. It is doubtful, however, whether Berlin is prepared to conclude a bargain of this kind. It may well prefer to nazify Hungary in its own way, perhaps by encouraging a crusade for the recovery of Transylvania from Rumania.

Whether or not a new German move in this direction is imminent, it is certain that the way is being prepared. One interesting angle is the revival of Ukrainian propaganda within the Slovakian protectorate; another is seen in the reports of axis demands on Yugoslavia for transit facilities and economic support in the event of war. Preoccupation with the Danzig problem has diverted attention from other irons that Hitler is heating. It must not be forgotten that Danzig is by no means his only ambition or even his most important one.

Unfit to Print?

ISADOR LUBIN, Commissioner of Labor Statistics in the Department of Labor, has caught the editors of the New York *Times* with their statistical shirttails out. Though the spectacle is not ungratifying, we call attention to it here not from a desire to gloat but because the same statistical errors are likely to be committed elsewhere. The *Times* seems to think that we ought to substitute wage-cutting for pump-priming. In an editorial on August 8 headed In Place of Pump-Priming, it cited figures from an article in the London *Economist* to show that average hourly earnings in American industry rose 23 per cent from 1929 to 1938, while wage rates in Great Britain rose "by less than a third of the American increase." At the same time total pay rolls in this country were 18½ per cent lower in 1938 than in 1929, while in Britain pay rolls were 20 per cent higher. The *Times* suggests that recovery lagged here because wages were too high.

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Commissioner Lubin, in a letter published by the *Times* on August 12, points out two fallacies in this familiar argument. The first is a simple one. One cannot compare *average hourly earnings* with *wage rates,* particularly since, as Commissioner Lubin asserts, "by far the greatest proportion of wage-earners in American factories are paid on a piece-work basis." The second fallacy is a more subtle one. It lies in identifying high wages with high production costs. Commissioner Lubin shows that in this country productivity per man hour in manufacturing rose 27 per cent between 1929 and 1935, or more than average hourly earnings. In some plants wage rates are higher than ever before, while unit labor costs are at a new low. Furthermore, Commissioner Lubin says, "under modern conditions of mass production there are many industries in which changes in the rate of mass production are far more significant than changes in wage rates. One need merely cite the case of the steel industry, where the evidence is to the effect that an increase of production from 25 per cent plant capacity to 60 per cent is accompanied by a 35 per cent decline in the man-hours required to produce a gross ton of finished steel products."

It may not be inappropriate at this point to recall that the Federal Trade Commission report to the monopoly inquiry, "Monopoly and Competition in Steel," revealed that the industry's prices were fixed to cover fixed charges and yield a profit when operation was at "less than 40 per cent of capacity." It is clear that if steel output could be enlarged by lowering prices, labor costs in the industry would be vastly reduced without any reduction in wage rates. Production costs can be lowered without lowering wages; often they can be lowered by raising wages and obtaining more efficient work. As for British wage levels, it might be well to remember that our automobile, our radio, our furniture, and our electrical-supply manufacturers would find themselves bankrupt if they had to adjust output to the shrunken markets provided by Britain's low wage levels.

The *Times* shares our high regard for the *Economist.* The *Times* drew its figures from a leading editorial on Laggard Recovery in America in the July 1 issue of the British weekly. But though the *Times* was glad enough to draw ammunition from the piece for an excursion into the economic benefits of wage-cutting, it passed in silence over other sections of the *Economist's* analysis. The *Economist* treated some of the *Times's* own pet theories with scorn. How often has not the *Times* explained that unwise taxation, continued deficits, and a hostile attitude toward business account for the failure of business to recover under the New Deal? The *Economist* thinks it "very unlikely" that these grievances have had a major effect on the volume of investment. As for the continued deficit, "the volume of interest rates . . . would not seem to indicate that the size of Treasury borrowings has either cast doubts on the government's credit or monopolized the supply of credit." "Similarly," the *Economist* declares, "it is difficult to take seriously the allegation that the 'anti-business' attitude of the Administration has prevented much new enterprise, *though it is possible that business is choking of its own bitterness.*" The italics are ours.

On with the Show

THE row among the country's entertainers looks at first glance like a super-vaudeville with such headliners as Sophie Tucker and Helen Hayes kidding each other's acts, while William Green, in character, scratches his head before the greatest alphabetical puzzle since the early days of the New Deal.

We'll try to make it clear. The Four A's stands for Associated Actors and Artistes of America; it is affiliated with the A. F. of L. and is the parent body of the various unions of performers whose initials run from A. F. A. to S. A. G. The charter of the A. F. A., American Federation of Actors, made up of variety, night-club, and circus players, was revoked by the Four A's after a trial in which the officers of the A. F. A. were charged with mingling the relief funds of the union with its general funds. Sophie Tucker, president, and Ralph Whitehead, executive secretary of the A. F. A., who is the center of the present storm, walked out on the trial during a minor riot. The Four A's, having expelled the A. F. A., chartered a new union, the A. G. V. A., American Guild of Variety Artists, to take its place. The A. F. A., however, flouting the discipline of its parent body, accepted a charter from the I. A. T. S. E., the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees, the stagehands' union, which has long had its eye on the performers. At this all the performers' unions dashed into the headlines. The Four A's threatened to leave the A. F. of L., presumably for a better alphabetical hole, the C. I. O. And its affiliated unions also declared war on the "raid" of the stagehands' union. At least two of them, the Actors' Equity Association and the American Federation of Radio Artists, suspended Sophie Tucker, who in her infinite variety belongs to several unions. Sophie, out of loyalty to Mr. Whitehead, went with him to the I. A. T. S. E. Helen Hayes "spanked" Sophie in an open letter, and *Variety* advised her to "come home." Meanwhile an air force from Hollywood made up of stars from the Screen Actors' Guild, another affiliate of the Four A's, swooped down on Mr. Green in their flying machine and demanded that the executive council uphold the Four A's in its right to discipline an affiliate, and forbid the "raid" of I. A. T. S. E.

As we go to press, no autograph hunters have been injured, and an A. F. of L. committee is trying to devise a

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compromise. The I. A. T. S. E. seems ready to withdraw if the A. F. A. is reinstated and Mr. Whitehead somehow taken care of. Mingling union funds, say the old business agents, is a common practice, and Mr. Whitehead has not been proved guilty of any dishonesty. They have even gone so far as to suggest a referendum of the A. F. A. rank and file, which has not yet been consulted by anybody.

There are hints that this new episode in the battle of the stagehands and the "artistes" may be settled soon. For our part we feel as if we had spent a week taking tests from an oculist and we'd like to be excused. We plan to go A. W. O. L.

[*Freda Kirchwey's column will be resumed in the issue of September 2, when she returns from her vacation.*]

So Roosevelt Got a Licking

BY KENNETH G. CRAWFORD

Washington, August 14

NOW that the commotion is over and the dust has settled, it isn't quite so clear who won the big fight in the first session of the Seventy-sixth Congress. The tory coalition got the newspaper decision all right, but it begins to look as if Roosevelt collected the long end of the purse. Certainly the joyous editorial announcements that the New Deal was over, that Roosevent's prestige had been destroyed, and that the conservatives would now run the country their own way were, to say the least, premature. The fact is that Roosevelt emerged from the mêlée with more political power and strategic advantages than he took into it.

Some of the coalition leaders are beginning to feel the backwash of their excesses. They wish they hadn't won quite so handily or quite so much. They are on a hot spot and they know it.

Now for the first time the President is in a position to hold the coalitionists responsible for what happens to business at home and to peace abroad. He has called them gamblers, betting on peace and prosperity. He knows, and they know, that they have two bad bets. And they stand to lose their political pants on either one. There can be no doubt this time about responsibility. Always before, the coalitionists have forced Roosevelt to modify his policies and accept blame for the consequences. They were at their best when they were almost but not quite winning, as in 1937, when their growing power made it necessary to cut down on government spending. The recession resulted, but it was Roosevelt's recession, not theirs.

If, as a result of the new relief bill, the country sees an exhibition of suffering and dangerous unrest—as it almost certainly will—the Woodrum gang will get the blame. If Hitler feels freer to kick Poland around than he felt before the Senate refused to pass Roosevelt's neutrality bill—as he probably does—Hiram Johnson, William E. Borah (who knew more about conditions abroad than the State Department), and Gerald P. Nye will have to accept full responsibility. If business gets bruised next year because the cushion provided by the lending bill has been removed while relief expenditures are curtailed—as it inevitably will—the tory leaders of the House will get the thanks in reverse. If the country resents a slackening in the popular slum-clearance program of the United States Housing Authority—as it will when the time comes—the conservative leaders of Congress will feel the brickbats.

Roosevelt's tactics since adjournment have not been calculated to raise the spirits of the brighter coalitionists. His analysis of the situation at his first Hyde Park press conference after Congress went home showed very clearly that he was going to make the most of the conservative victories. His figure of speech in explaining the defeated lending program—Congress pushing business over a precipice—was particularly apt and ominous. Unless Congress corrects its mistake at the next session, as it may by approving a new Public Works Administration program, a 1940 slump is as certain as the sunrise.

As matters stand, the tories have only one hope for political salvation—that business actually will buck up, get some of the "confidence" so much talked about, and produce a boom. That is what the coalition leaders confidently predicted would happen if they licked the New Deal. It is a forlorn hope. Even business men admit this.

Supporters of the theory that all that business needs is confidence cling to their simple formula with a tenacity that is almost touching. There is pathos in the position of the Scripps-Howard newspapers, which hailed the Congressional revolt as an invitation for return of business confidence and then demonstrated the depth of their own confidence by folding up another property, the Buffalo *Times*. There was irony in the reports of the United Press, the Scripps-Howard wire service, on its search for the business confidence that was to follow the revolt against Roosevelt. "Confidence?" in effect said business leaders interviewed by the United Press. "Oh, yes, to be sure. Yes, indeed. Congress has given us great

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confidence. But we don't expect a boom. No, we don't even expect much of a boomlet. In fact, we can't have much confidence until Roosevelt is out of the White House." Walter I. Beam, executive vice-president of the Cleveland Chamber of Commerce, who was among those interviewed, had confidence inspired by Congress, but added, "One cause of optimism—rather a negative one—is the fact that Congress has adjourned." Wonderful are the ways of confidence.

Roy Howard's reporters can tell business it has confidence, but business doesn't believe them. Indeed, business cannot get confidence from its victory in Congress because business is not a thinking organism. Business is like an amoeba, which reacts to chemical changes in the water surrounding it. What business reacts to is profits and the hope of profits. Reduction in relief spending and curtailment of government investments, cutting into purchasing power as they will, are not going to enhance the prospects for profits. Ergo, these acts of Congress are not going to stimulate business. It just isn't in the cards that business will pick up during the next year with government spending scheduled for the ax.

The anti-New Dealers, with no program except their nostalgia for the laissez faire economy which is gone forever, are not in an enviable position. At last they have got themselves into a predicament where they can't help being shown up. The Young Democrats' convention at Pittsburgh was the pay-off. Roosevelt's message announcing that he would not support a reactionary in 1940 took it by storm. Despite the efforts of former Congressman John O'Connor and the Garner crowd to disrupt the meeting, it was a Roosevelt show from the start. If they had not known it before, Democrats know now that the Democratic nomination without Roosevelt's indorsement won't be worth having. The nonsensical "return to fundamentals" by Congress, unless all portents are wrong, will have given Roosevelt as much power in 1940 as he had in 1936. He's due for the same terrible licking the tories gave him in the *Literary Digest* poll.

Will There Be War?

BY ROBERT DELL

Paris, August 4

AN ENGLISH friend of mine, well known in America, said in a letter that I received from him a few days ago: "The black crisis for England and France is timed for August, and the age of miracles for Old England is past." This has been a pretty general opinion for some little time on both sides of the English Channel, and perhaps the very fact that a crisis this month is so generally expected is a reason for doubting whether the expectation will turn out to have been justified. In the past, wars and international crises have more often arrived when they were least expected than at dates fixed for them in advance. Hitler in particular has hitherto usually surprised the world. It is, however, possible that there will be a crisis in August and extremely probable that August and September will be decisive months. If we reach the month of October without war or a major crisis, it will be fairly safe to assume that there will be no war this year. Indeed, one might almost go farther than that and say that the danger of war will then be over for some time to come, for it seems to me that Hitler will have to make up his mind within the next two months whether or not to take the risk of war. Time, as Louis Fischer said in *The Nation* of July 22, is not on the side of the fascist powers, and perhaps 1939 is the last year for Germany to start a war with the smallest chance of success. I should say that if Hitler should decide to act, the time he would be most likely to choose would be immediately after the Nazi Congress, which will be held at Nürnberg September 2-11, but this is a matter of pure speculation. Nobody knows what will happen, perhaps not even Hitler himself. The fact that he has not already acted suggests that he has not yet definitely decided to take the plunge.

Hitler has no doubt been given pause by the consequences of his action of March 15, which he must now realize was a blunder and an unnecessary one, for he could have got complete control of Bohemia and Moravia without annexing them. The blunder was excusable, since he knew in advance that the British and French governments would do nothing to prevent the annexation, and he had no doubt been assured by his usual English and French informants that all would be well. Neville Chamberlain's speech in the House of Commons on March 15 clearly showed that he was prepared to condone the final destruction of Czechoslovakia and to continue his policy of appeasement in spite of it, and Hitler had no reason to expect the reaction of opinion in England, even in the Conservative Party, which presented Chamberlain with the alternative of changing his policy or resigning. The bitterness of Hitler's resentment at having been let down by his English friends has found vent in the violent anti-British campaign of the German press.

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For my part, I am convinced that Hitler does not wish to precipitate a European war if he can help it, and I am not alone in that conviction. It has always been my opinion that any of Hitler's acts of aggression could have been stopped without war by a firm stand on the part of the British and French governments. It is my opinion now that if Hitler becomes convinced that any direct or indirect aggression on his part will mean war with England, France, Russia, and Poland, he will refrain. It has interested me to find that both these opinions are shared by an English newspaperman who has been for several years a correspondent in Berlin, and who says that most of the foreign correspondents and diplomats in Berlin think the same.

There is, however, too much reason to believe that Hitler is not yet convinced that Chamberlain has dropped appeasement or that the British will fight for Danzig or Poland. Many other people are not convinced. Nearly everybody coming from Central Europe believes that Hitler will annex Danzig and that Poland will not start the fighting because the Poles cannot, after Prague, rely on England and France. I hope that this is a mistake, but I am not sure that it is, nor am I at all sure that the Poles would not start the fighting. They themselves say that they will fight. They even say that we must not be surprised if Poland takes action brusquely. It is impossible to have any confidence in Beck, the Polish Foreign Minister, who has a great responsibility for the present situation in Danzig. When Mr. Lester, now deputy secretary-general of the League of Nations, was High Commissioner of the League in Danzig and was trying to prevent the Danzig Senate from violating the constitution of the Free City, Beck was to a large extent responsible for the failure of the League Council to back him. Beck flatly refused to fulfil the obligation of the Polish government to send Polish troops into Danzig to preserve order if the High Commissioner asked for them, and it was at Beck's suggestion that Lester was appointed to his present post and that a Swiss gentleman with strong pro-Nazi sympathies was sent to Danzig in his place. It is by no means certain, however, that Marshal Rydz-Smigly would give way, even if Beck were willing to.

In my opinion Hitler will not risk war for Danzig alone. If he acts in Danzig, it will be either because he believes that he can act without risking war or because he has made up his mind that it is a question of now or never for Germany and that he must risk war or abandon the hope of achieving his aims in Eastern Europe. The latter hypothesis seems to me improbable, for Hitler must know that, if Poland went to war, England and France and also Russia would be drawn in, whether Neville Chamberlain liked it or not. It would be impossible for the British and French governments openly to violate their engagements to Poland, just as it would have been impossible for the French government openly to violate the treaty of alliance with Czechoslovakia if the Czechoslovak government had resisted German aggression. It is much more likely that Hitler may count on a successful repetition in the case of Poland of the British and French policy in regard to Czechoslovakia. There are persistent rumors that Chamberlain and his friends are bringing pressure on Poland to come to an agreement with Germany about Danzig. In the House of Commons on July 31 Chamberlain was pressed by Sir Archibald Sinclair, the Liberal leader, to make "a clear, firm, and spirited declaration" on the subject of resistance to aggression. Naturally he did not respond to the invitation. In regard to Danzig Chamberlain said that his statement in the House of Commons on July 10 "was in clear and unmistakable terms" and that anything he could add to it would do nothing to strengthen it. The statement of July 10 did, indeed, make it clear and unmistakable that the British government would fight for Danzig only if the Polish government considered that any action that Hitler might take was a threat to the independence of Poland and acted accordingly. The whole onus of taking the initiative was thrown on Poland. Chamberlain has never said and will not say what, as Low suggested in a recent cartoon, he ought to say, namely, "We shall fight" in the event of any attempt by Germany to change the status of the Free City.

Courtesy *l'Humanite*

Prime Minister Chamberlain

Hitler has counted hitherto on the unwillingness of England and France to fight, and he has always been right. The danger is that he may count on it once too often and that England and France may be obliged by Poland to fight. The probability is that, as Winston Churchill said in the House of Commons on August 2, we are on the eve of "a supreme trial of will-power"—that the immediate purpose of the vast military preparations in Germany and the concentration of troops on several parts of the German frontier is intimidation. Hitler's probable intention is, as the diplomatic correspondent of the Manchester *Guardian* said on August 2, to test the steadfastness of England, France, and Poland, particularly of Poland. If Poland shows any signs of giving way, the Danzig Senate will ask Hitler to incorporate the territory of the Free City in the Reich, and Hitler will consent. The question in the last resort is whether Poland has enough confidence in England and France to resist. If, on the other hand, Hitler really makes

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up his mind to precipitate a European war, which I still think improbable, he will annex Danzig to make it a base for military operations against the Polish Corridor. Hitler is no doubt trying to obtain the cooperation of Hungary in the event of war, but it is not certain that he will succeed. He might offer the Hungarians Slovakia, which they want, but at the present moment Slovakia has been drained by Germany to such an extent and is consequently so impoverished that it would not be an economic and financial asset, and the Hungarians would be foolish to accept the bribe. Moreover, if they have any sense, they ought to recognize that Hitler will not finally abandon his control of Slovakia and that if that country were annexed to Hungary he would sooner or later extend his control to Hungary itself. They might perhaps be more tempted by the prospect of recovering Transylvania from Rumania.

It would be foolish to deny that Hitler has some ground for believing that he can get Danzig without war. The adjournment of the British Parliament until October 3 gives Chamberlain a free hand during the two critical months, and the debate and vote in the House of Commons on August 2 show that many of his own supporters are as uneasy as the Liberal and Labor opposition about the use that he may make of it. In the debate half a dozen members belonging to the government majority joined Mr. Churchill in supporting the Liberal and Labor demand that the House should meet again on August 21, and in the division about forty ministerialists abstained. Chamberlain was so much irritated by the evident lack of confidence in him that he completely lost his temper, and his speech was extremely bitter. Yet his attitude fully justifies the distrust. The Hudson-Wohlthat incident was sufficiently disquieting, for nobody believes the story that Hudson acted on his own initiative without Chamberlain's knowledge or consent and there is every reason to believe that the author of the "peace plan" he suggested was Sir Horace Wilson, Chamberlain's confidential adviser.

Proposals on similar lines have been floating about in both England and France for some time past, and before March 15 an influential group of French big business men was actually carrying on secret negotiations with a similar group in Germany, with the encouragement, if not of Daladier, at any rate of certain other important members of the French government. The proposals of the French big business men went farther than the Hudson-Wohlthat plan—so much farther that they amounted to a close commercial and economic union between France and Germany, with an anti-British tendency. At the very moment that Hitler entered Prague a delegation of the British Federation of Industry was in Berlin with the approval of the British government, and the government itself was on the point of sending Hudson to Germany to discuss a commercial agreement. Apart from the childishness of the plan suggested by Hudson to Wohlthat—among other things Germany was asked to surrender Bohemia and Moravia in return for a loan—any sort of peace proposal to Germany at the present moment was, as the *Economist* justly said, a grave blunder, for it could not fail to be taken in Germany as a sign of weakening on the part of the British government, as in fact it was. It also gave the German press the opportunity of protesting with righteous indignation against the suggestion that Germany could be bought.

The peroration of Chamberlain's speech in the House of Commons on July 31 showed that he has not abandoned the policy of appeasement. Bad feeling between nations, he said, "was fomented daily by poisonous propaganda in the press and by other means." He could not help feeling that "if only this war of words could be halted and if, in addition, some action could be taken which would tend to restore the confidence of the people in the peaceful intentions of all the states of Europe, there was no question that could not be and should not be solved by peaceful discussion." And he added in conclusion: "I believe that that great fundamental truth is beginning to get down to the minds of rulers and peoples alike. It is on that belief that I base my hope that we may yet find a way to escape from the present nightmare and come once again into the sunlight of peace."

Unfortunately, not all the states of Europe have peaceful intentions, and the question at issue cannot be solved by peaceful discussion since it is simply whether or not Germany is to be allowed to expand territorially at the expense of other countries. Did Mr. Chamberlain mean to suggest that we should peacefully discuss how much of other people's territory Herr Hitler is to be allowed to annex?

On July 31 Chamberlain said that some of the reports in the press about the militarization of Danzig were exaggerated, that the situation there "did not cause undue concern," and that the Polish government could be trusted "to continue to exercise a wise and statesmanlike restraint." On August 3 Lord Halifax said in the House of Lords that the government was fully alive to the possible repercussion of conditions in Danzig upon the future of European peace and that in general he could not "encourage anyone to feel complacent about the situation in which the world finds itself." On the same day, however, Sir Thomas Inskip, Secretary for the Dominions, speaking at a political garden party at Oban in Scotland, declared that he had "good reason" for saying that "war is not only not inevitable but it is unlikely." There does not seem to be complete agreement among the members of the British government. It is at least possible that Chamberlain and Inskip are more optimistic than Halifax because they intend to see to it that Poland continues to "exercise restraint" whatever Hitler may do.

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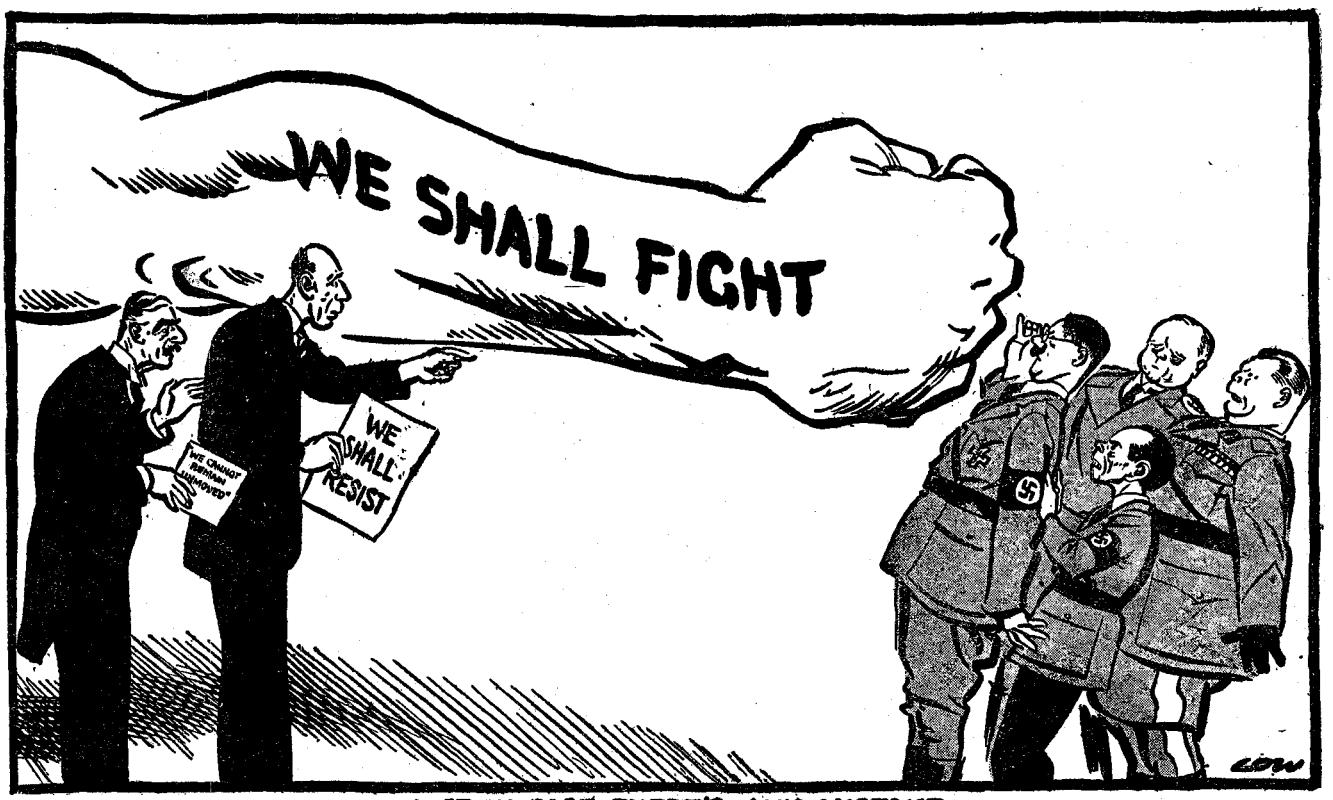
I do not say that there is going to be a Polish Munich, but I do say that the possibility of one cannot be excluded, although the Polish government may prove more difficult to deal with than the Czechoslovak government was. No one can prophesy.

In Paris too there is a certain optimism in official quarters. An important member of the French Cabinet expressed the opinion in private nearly three months ago that there would be no war this year, but he based his opinion on the ground that Hitler knew that a war would end in the defeat of Germany and that he would not risk it if the alliance with Russia were made. Daladier's decision to postpone the French general election for two years suggests that he does not expect war in the near future. The excuse for the postponement—that an election campaign is undesirable in view of the present international situation—is a flimsy one, for the election would not have taken place until next April or May in any case, and the campaign would certainly not have been begun this side of Christmas. If Daladier had believed that war was imminent, there would have been no point in postponing the general election until 1942, for in the event of war the election would be postponed by general consent. It seems to me, therefore, that the probable reason for Daladier's taking this action now in spite of strong opposition is that he thinks that there is not going to be war in the near future and that, if he waited, he would not have the slightest excuse for postponement. If I am right, the question arises why he does not anticipate war. I am assured by people who ought to know that Daladier is now sincerely determined on a firm policy toward Germany, but his past record is not one to inspire confidence.

There was an allusion to the Moscow negotiations in Chamberlain's speech of August 2 which was not reassuring. A Labor member, Gordon Macdonald (not a relative of the late Prime Minister), had suggested that if the House of Commons continued in session for three weeks there would be a better chance of obtaining at last the Russian agreement. Chamberlain said sarcastically, "We should no doubt be three weeks nearer an agreement," and called Macdonald's attention to an official communiqué from Moscow which, in Chamberlain's opinion, did not suggest that an agreement was near. The communiqué in question had merely said that the Soviet government still insisted that there should be no loophole in the formula adopted concerning indirect aggression, and that the formula proposed by the British government left such a loophole. The loophole is probably of the same nature as that in the statement about Danzig made by the British Prime Minister in the House of Commons on July 10.

To sum up, the situation is full of uncertainty, and the next two months will be anxious ones. There would be less reason for anxiety if the control of British policy were not still in the hands of a man of mediocre intelligence, blind obstinacy, and inordinate vanity, who is the instrument of people much cleverer than himself and who believes himself to be the chosen instrument of God and therefore incapable of making a mistake.



JUST IN CASE THERE'S ANY MISTAKE

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One-Third Ill Fed

BY LESLIE EPSTEIN

"ONE-THIRD of a nation ill fed"—the phrase threw a spotlight on an appalling condition in the United States. But it was an understatement. Malnutrition affects from one-third to one-half of our population, and with its consequences—the deficiency diseases of rickets, "working-class" anemia, and pellagra, and lessened resistance to all disease—is one of our most urgent social problems. Not only manual workers but large numbers of farmers and white-collar workers live on a diet inadequate to maintain health. This fact has been determined by recent nutritional investigations which have analyzed the principal food requirements of the body and the exact composition of various foodstuffs. They reveal the gap between what should be eaten and what is eaten.

What is an adequate diet? It is one that "will give rise to that state of health which cannot be bettered by food alone." In other words, it is an *optimum* diet. (Unfortunately, not all expert studies have been done on this basis, which is probably the chief reason why their results vary. Investigation on the basis of a minimum diet is very difficult.) Such a diet must not only satisfy hunger but meet the qualitative needs of the body. A man needs carbohydrates, fats, and proteins to give him energy, but he also needs "protective foods" to keep his body in top working order. This is primarily the function of the vitamins, the minerals, and the "first-class" proteins, that is, proteins derived from animal and dairy sources. The main energy-giving foods are bread, potatoes, and sugar, while the main protective foods are milk, eggs, fruits, and vegetables. Experts agree in the main on the approximate quantities of these foodstuffs needed by the body. Thus it is possible to construct specimen adequate diets, price them, and then determine by investigation how many people can and do purchase such a decent dietary. The results of many such investigations show that a great number of our people go hungry—in nutritional jargon, their calorific intake is insufficient—but that the trouble with a far greater number is that they don't get the proper "protective" foods. These foods are not luxuries for the body; they are necessities, since without them many diseases and conditions of ill-health develop. But the average man's pocket-book makes him regard them as luxuries. This is the main source of the trouble.

There are several ways to find out about the diets of populations, and they have all been explored pretty thoroughly. One method is to construct a healthful diet and then determine what percentage of the population earns enough money to be able to buy it. The Bureau of Home Economics in Washington has constructed a diet to meet human food requirements as cheaply as possible, and in 1936 the WPA determined the cost of this diet in the retail market. Then the Bureau of Labor Statistics studied the incomes of all families in certain cities scattered over the country and calculated the number of families which could afford the diet. The results showed that "one-third of the white families and almost all the Negro families were too poor to purchase the WPA maintenance diet." The situation in a few regionally typical cities is as follows:

PERCENTAGE OF FAMILIES WITH ANNUAL INCOMES IN 1935-36 INSUFFICIENT TO PURCHASE WPA MAINTENANCE DIET

City	*White Families*	*Negro Families*
Columbus, Ohio	29.2	78.4
Mobile, Ala.	38.8	92.3
Atlanta, Ga.	34.4	89.6
Chicago, Ill.	37.0	....
Portland, Ore.	39.8	....

A second way to investigate the problem is to determine the amount of money spent on food each year, and then see if an adequate diet could have been purchased with that sum. This has been done for wage-earners and low-salaried clerical workers by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, using as its basis the "adequate diet at minimum cost" of the Bureau of Home Economics. The results for 1936, not a depression year, are as follows:

PERCENTAGE OF FAMILIES WITH ANNUAL FOOD EXPENDITURE TOO SMALL TO ENABLE THE PURCHASE OF AN "ADEQUATE DIET AT MINIMUM COST"

(From League of Nations Report on Nutrition and Health)
All Figures for 1936

City	*White Families*	*Negro Families*
Baltimore, Md.	32.0	75.7
Pittsburgh, Pa.	32.4	61.9
New York, N. Y.	12.7	36.0
Birmingham, Ala.	43.1	84.2
Mobile, Ala.	49.3	87.2
St. Louis, Mo.	23.2	53.8
San Francisco, Cal.	14.1	....
New Orleans, La.	32.4	69.9

The actual proportion of defective diets was probably somewhat higher than the figures indicate because many

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families are less skilful than the Bureau of Home Economics in apportioning their food expenditures.

A third method is to study the actual food consumed by a number of families and determine its adequacy. Since it is a direct method, the results should be even more accurate than those of other systems. A group of 897 families was covered by the Bureau of Home Economics on the basis of figures collected by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The figures showed that only 29 per cent of the families had what was considered an optimum diet, that 45 per cent had diets teetering on the border line between sufficiency and insufficiency, and that 29 per cent had definitely inadequate diets. Thus three-quarters of the families studied—they were all wage-earners and low-salaried clerical workers—had less than optimum diets. A study made by the Children's Bureau in 1934 found that in a group of poor families 20 per cent were eating only bread, beans, and potatoes—with cabbage once a week for a luxury.

The situation varies of course with the times. From 1931 to 1933 the basic minimum of food was beyond the reach not only of almost all workers on relief but of large numbers of employed workers in the lowest income ranges. Nor is diet essentially better among farmers and farm workers. In 1936 the Bureau of Home Economics, basing its work on figures collected between 1917 and 1932, concluded that "the incidence of malnutrition is as least as great in rural as in industrial districts."

It is thus quite clear that large sections of our population are not getting proper food. What happens? Many get sick, developing as the most obvious consequences of malnutrition the so-called "deficiency diseases." These are diseases which are known to be caused by the lack of some specific dietary necessity. Only a few examples need be cited. In 1933 some four thousand people in the Southern states died of pellagra because their diet consisted almost entirely of hominy, corn bread, and syrup, and such a diet did not supply enough nicotinic acid to keep their nervous systems intact. (It is worth noting that another Georgia, that of the U. S. S. R., was also formerly a pellagra area, but the disease was wiped out there when protective foods became more generally available.)

Another group of deficiency diseases is caused by lack of vitamin D and calcium. One of these is rickets, which is widespread in our population. In 1921, 75 per cent of the children of New York City showed signs of it, and a study of Connecticut school children found evidence of rickets in 83 per cent. Dental decay, also due to lack of milk and other sources of vitamin D, is extremely widespread, and may have such serious after-effects as heart disease, arthritis, and osteomyelitis. Many pregnant mothers suffer from calcium lack. A study made of 600 pregnant women, of whom one-half suffered from muscular weakness and pain, disclosed that their symptoms were promptly relieved in almost all cases when they were given milk, cod-liver oil, or some other source of calcium and vitamin D. One of the common results of rickets in girls is contracted pelvis, a condition which makes the birth of children difficult. This structural defect is a very important cause of infant and maternal mortality. All in all, the lack of calcium and vitamin D is so widespread, and its effects are so devastating, that it is perhaps our most important food deficiency. Yet to avoid the diseases which result from it, it is only necessary to eat eggs, cod-liver oil, or milk (summer milk or irradiated winter milk).

Only one more common deficiency disease need be mentioned here, namely, "working-class" anemia. This is caused by the lack of iron, which is found in meat, eggs, and vegetables. In Warrentown, Pennsylvania, 25 per cent of the school children were found to have anemia, and it is common in pregnant women owing to the increased demand for iron during the period of childbearing. Of course the United States has no monopoly on these diseases: 70 per cent of London's working-class women show some degree of nutritional anemia; 87 per cent of London's school children show signs of rickets; and 80 per cent of them have bad teeth.

Other serious consequences of an improper diet are general ill-health and impairment of population growth. In 1933 one-third of the school children of New York had clinical malnutrition. Children's heights and weights often vary directly with the incomes of their families. In 1932 unemployed families had a 48 per cent higher sickness rate than completely employed families, and "depression poor" had 73 per cent more illness than people with a "comfortable" income. Obviously, not all this illness was due to malnutrition, but it seems fair to conclude that a large percentage of it was caused directly or indirectly by lack of proper food. Bad housing is an important cause of ill-health because of the low level of sanitation, the overcrowding, the bad ventilation, the insects and rats, and the increased number of accidents and fires in slums, but it is important to realize that an improvement in housing without an improvement in diet is an inadequate, indeed a dangerous, health measure. If a higher rent must be paid in the new house, more harm than good will be done. M'Gonigle and Kirby found in Stockton-on-Tees, in England, that a group of slum dwellers who moved into a new housing project actually had more illness than the control group which had been left behind in the old slums. Investigation of this surprising fact showed that the rent had been increased in the new homes, and the money for this increase could only come out of the food budget. Even the respiratory diseases, commonly supposed to be caused by bad housing conditions, have been shown to be at least

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partially due to the lowered resistance induced by malnutrition.

It is commonly believed that malnutrition is due to ignorance, that the working-class housewife doesn't know what to cook or how to cook it. Thus the Bishop of Ipswich wrote: "I think you are mistaken that there are 13,000,000 people underfed [in England]. On the contrary, the number is extremely small, and for the most part it is their own fault because their money is unwisely spent." But many studies have demonstrated that the Bishop is wrong. The British Medical Association has stated that "the average housewife does purchase a physiologically satisfactory diet *if she has adequate purchasing power*" (italics mine), and the United States Bureau of Home Economics says that "the inferior composition of diets obtained by lower income groups is largely necessitated by the exigencies of the price system." According to Bachrach, "some improvement [in diet] could be brought about by educational methods, but a far greater improvement would result from securing that all who serve the community by working are so remunerated as to make adequate expenditure on food possible for all."

A study by Ruby McOdell in America indicates that education will help to some extent, but one hears a lot of loose talk about how much it will help. Certainly every section of the population should be made conscious of the necessity for including milk, eggs, fruits, and vegetables in their diet. But the basic problem is one of wages and prices. "Look after the availability of food, and nutrition will take care of itself," said Lord Horder in Parliament. It is as simple and as complex as that. Look after production and employment, look after the social system, and you will cut the deeply penetrating roots of malnutrition.

Meanwhile there are smaller urgent jobs to be done. An immediate program should include at least the following points:

1. Supply free milk to all school children, and provide inexpensive milk for the whole population, especially for pregnant women and children in working-class homes.
2. Extend cheap or free hot noon meals in the schools.
3. Disseminate information on nutrition, and coordinate all the agencies attempting to deal with the problem.

It has been impossible, in the space of this article, to give a complete picture of malnutrition in America, to document assertions, or to consider all the complex problems which the subject raises. The two best sources of information are the League of Nations Report on Nutrition and the United States government publications called "Health and Depression Studies." The latter are part of a cooperative undertaking of various federal departments which have studied the living standards of 380,000 families in the United States.

America's Best-lighted City

BY McALISTER COLEMAN

ONCE a year for some time back there has come out of the West a paper-bound book that makes as exciting reading for some people as any swift-paced detective yarn. It's the story of the fight of the rank and file for possession of their own, and unlike most stories of that sort, it marches triumphantly from one instalment to another. It is the Annual Report of the Department of Lighting of the City of Seattle, Washington.

The current instalment tells of both triumph and tragedy. "America's best-lighted city" is not content with that proud title but goes on to extend the uses of electricity. Goes on under new leadership, however, for Ross of Seattle died last spring.

Sentiment is mingled with the cold statistics of performance in this last report, which opens with a long poem in memory of James Delmage Ross, who in 1904, as electrical engineer of Seattle, set out to make his city a glowing yardstick for the public ownership and operation of electric power. The bespectacled, kind-faced fighter, whom President Roosevelt called one of America's most useful citizens, had the rare satisfaction, before he died at the age of sixty-seven, of knowing that his youthful dream was coming to realization in concrete wedged into solid granite across a hurrying river, in the unanswerable figures of service rendered, in a magnificent mountain countryside salvaged for the people's pleasure along the hydroelectric development. Seattle and the nation will sorely miss Ross, but there is an enduring monument to his memory in the Skagit River transmission system, which brings light to the city from water falling over the Diablo and Gorge dams.

Any way you look at it, economically, politically, aesthetically, the Seattle publicly owned set-up has private enterprise licked. Last year's revenues from the city-owned plant were $5,859,973, an increase of $152,093 over 1937. Last year 97,431 customers used 439,541,000 kilowatt hours at an average rate of 2.49 cents per kwh.

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Small residential consumers of city power in Seattle use an average of 106 kilowatt hours a month, or 1,272 a year. The average rate of privately owned plants in the United States is 4.39 cents, and the average consumption is 66 kilowatt hours a month, or 792 a year.

Seattle politics generally are no better than they should be, but a local politician would be monkeying with a particularly dangerous buzz-saw if he tried to touch the lighting system. Ross's fight against private interests for the ownership of the Skagit is a part of Seattle folklore not forgotten by consumers there. It was education for democracy, material for a Pare Lorentz picture that could teach the rest of us how to handle our power pirates.

"On the Skagit River, in the Cascade Mountains, 125 miles northeast of Seattle," the report tells us, "the city is developing step by step, as its needs for current dictate, a hydroelectric power project that will ultimately produce nearly 3,000,000,000 kilowatt hours annually, from three generating stations with an aggregate capacity of 1,120,000 horse-power." But whereas a privately owned utility erecting dams or transmission lines lays waste its right of way with no concern for the natural beauties, Seattle does differently. Along with the engineers and the blasting gangs go foresters and nurserymen and florists to see that the country around the dams is not despoiled. And that Skagit River country is breath-takingly beautiful. Last year during the summer months close to a thousand visitors a week took the two-day trip up the Skagit. They traveled on the city railroad, sailed on Diablo Lake on the city steamer Alice Ross, slept in city-owned camps, and ate three square meals at a total cost of $4.05 per person. As the report explains, "Visitors are mostly patrons of the Seattle Department of Lighting who have already paid their share of the support of the institution through their light and power bills. The $4.05 charge is therefore only slightly above the cost of the trip. So great is the rush of the people that no attempt is made to advertise the trips by newspaper or radio. The only advertising is by word of mouth of those who have been there and returned to sing its praises."

"All very fine," says the spokesman for the privately owned utility, "but what about taxes? Who is paying for all this? Isn't it true that the low rates of Seattle are possible because the city-owned light company pays no taxes into either the state or local treasury?"

The answer is on page 97. Put that page from the report in your hat and take it out and read it to the next weeping Wendell Willkie you meet, moaning about "socialist, subsidized, tax-free Seattle light." It says that "in 1938 City Light paid out $579,268, or 9.9 per cent of its total operating revenue, in direct and indirect taxes and in outright contributions to government. It has never in its entire history received one cent of subsidy from the general fund or out of taxes."

One item included in the Seattle statement and ostentatiously ignored in the arguments of the Willkies is the contribution to the cost of street lighting made by City Light. On the basis of rates for street, school, and public-building lighting charged in cities with privately owned systems, City Light saved the taxpayers of Seattle $500,000 in 1938. Such saving is often overlooked even by the advocates of municipal ownership. A recent consumers' survey made in the privately owned, high-rate New Jersey territory dominated by the Public Service Corporation showed that taxes paid by Public Service to municipalities were more than offset by revenue derived from street and public-building lighting at exorbitant rates. The often-repeated argument that private enterprise could do as well as public if the latter were forced to pay taxes falls flat as far as Seattle is concerned, and it is probable that an investigation of other communities where municipal ownership is under fire would bring out compensatory factors in public lighting to confound the tax-howlers.

When Superintendent Ross and his ally, Mayor Hiram C. Gill, set out to harness the turbulent Skagit in 1917, they had in mind more than just lighting Seattle's homes. City Light had brought the first carload of electric ranges to town as early as 1912. Today Seattle has more electric ranges in use than any other American city regardless of size. Seattle home-owners are heating their water by electricity at the cost of but three-quarters of a cent a kilowatt hour. "Today," says the report, "the family with an electric range, water heater, and refrigerator, together with small appliances and good lighting, uses around 4,000 kilowatt hours per year." (You will remember that the national average for private power consumption is 792 kilowatt hours.) In the well-to-do Broadmoor district of Seattle the consumption is averaging 7,000 kilowatt hours a year, a use of electricity so much greater than the average consumption reported from any other city that Broadmoor has become a mark for every municipal manager to aim at. But Broadmoor is simply following the rule that use increases as the rate is lowered, a rule which has not yet dominated the policies of the bulk of our private rate-makers.

With abundant power at low cost established for Seattle, the pioneers on Puget Sound are looking beyond their city limits. William J. McKeen, Ross's successor and acting superintendent of lighting, carries on in this report the arguments advanced by Ross in one of his last public speeches, made before the Seattle Engineers' Club in July, 1938. In that address, which caused the private utilities to raise the cry of "crackpot," Ross predicted transmission lines one thousand to two thousand miles in length, operating on direct current, with vacuum-tube equipment to convert it into alternating current for distribution. He saw America using ten times today's electric output within the next twenty years. He casually suggested the possibility of a direct-current transmission

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line which would carry clear across the continent from plants on the Columbia River in Washington the one and a half million kilowatts used in New York City, with a loss of but 10 per cent.

Then, coming closer to home, Ross took up his favorite theme, the coordination of public and private power plants in the Northwest. Publicly owned Tacoma juice is already tied up with Seattle's. Ross suggested going on with that money- and energy-saving set-up by building a 220,000-volt "backbone" transmission line from the Canadian border to Mexico, tying up all the systems on the way. Skagit, Bonneville, and Grand Coulee would be the giant power pools in such a co-ordinated system. "No one need fear," writes Superintendent McKeen, "that these Columbia River plants will be too large, or that they are in any way a menace to existing power systems, private or public. The electric age is still in its beginning, and uses for electricity, which is energy in its most convenient form, are multiplying every year. . . . The real problem ahead is to transmit and distribute the current to the user in ample quantity and at the lowest possible cost."

This problem is being solved in Seattle by inspired crackpots, if you will, who hold stubbornly to the notion that electricity is something to be used abundantly for the public good, not monopolized for private profit. The mold was broken, it is true, when James Delmage Ross was made. Other communities now under the dominance of private ownership may not look to just such devoted service as Seattle has enjoyed. But it has always been true that leadership in these matters is born of the demands of the rank and file. To consumers contemplating light bills from privately owned companies out of all proportion to the cost of generating and distributing the juice, the story of Seattle may well suggest that a rank-and-file demand is long overdue.

Everybody's Business

Letter to an Industrialist

August 5

DEAR X: I picture you this fine week-end in the bar of the country club celebrating with your friends the Congressional massacre of New Deal projects which wound up the session. I have no doubt you are drinking the health of Woodrum, Byrd, and Burke, and of those other Democrats who have shown what sound Republicans they are at heart, with a special bumper for old John Garner.

They have indeed served you well, giving almost a blanket indorsement of your diagnosis of the ills of business and underwriting your prescription. Look at the great achievements—from your point of view—of the past few months. The undistributed-profits tax has been repealed, and other taxation adjustments for which you asked have been effected; WPA activities have been curtailed; the spending-lending bill has been rejected; in short, the New Deal has been placed where you business men wanted it—in a strait-jacket. Well, my dear X, these things constitute the iron tonic which you have always insisted is essential for the cure of anemic business confidence; so I presume we shall shortly see a rush of new red blood in the investment arteries and a bloom of health upon the cheeks of industry.

The *Wall Street Journal* of August 3 quoted "a banker" as stating: "It has been my observation that for every $1 of government spending, there has been a contraction of about $1.50 in private lending. If the operation is reversed, I expect that the contraction of every $1 in government spending will be accompanied by an increase of $1.50 in private lending at first and eventually of $2." Remembering how business dived into a funkhole when public spending was cut sharply at the beginning of 1937, a good many of us are skeptical. But we agree that, since you and your friends have now in large measure obtained your terms, it is up to you to deliver the goods. You may be sure that the country will watch your performance closely and will expect to see the fruits of confidence refreshing not merely stockholders and stockbrokers but also the ten million or more unemployed.

You have the advantage of starting your push at a comparatively favorable moment. The economic weather has brightened perceptibly in the past two months, and the barometer is set fair. In June the Federal Reserve production index jumped five points to 97, and July is expected to show a further improvement. Dun and Bradstreet's latest weekly trade review reported gains in retail trade for the country as a whole of from 6 to 10 per cent over the corresponding week of 1938. Wholesalers are receiving substantially better orders for fall delivery: in men's wear, for instance, the increase over last year is estimated at around 30 per cent. The heavy industries are also more active, which suggests some revival in investment. Steel production is now around 60 per cent of capacity compared with 40 per cent at the same time last year; the consumption of base metals—one of the best recovery indices—is rising; and the machine-tool industry is very active, although partly, it is true, on foreign rearmament orders.

I suspect that this recent quickening of the economy is not entirely unconnected with the current high level of federal expenditure. That factor will continue to operate for several months, although the reduction in WPA appropriations will cause a gradual slowing down toward the end of the year. However, government contributions to the maintenance of purchasing power mean that you have a breathing space in which to oil and grease your confidence apparatus; to complete plans for those plant extensions you would have made long ago had not the horrific Mr. Roosevelt paralyzed you with fear. So no doubt by the time federal spending slackens you will be all ready to seize the pump handle and to start a vigorous flow of new investment through the channels of industry.

May I be permitted a word of warning? If recovery does get under way, if demand rises and production expands, do not regard that as a signal to hoist prices. I mention this particularly because one of those industrial tycoons whom you are all too apt to follow blindly—I refer to Weir of Weirtown—has recently been advocating just this policy for

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his own industry. Speaking on July 29 as president of the American Iron and Steel Institute, Mr. Weir declared that the recent reports of increased steel profits were misleading. Actually, he insisted, the industry as a whole is in the red. This sad condition, he continued, is due to the fact that "we are now selling below cost, and there is no reason for such a situation except failure on the part of the management in the industry to be profit-minded." I might mention, in parenthesis, that whatever is true of steel as a whole, some companies are certainly able to more than cover costs, including Mr. Weir's National Steel, which for the first half of this year reported net profits of $4,385,424, or $1.99 per common share, compared with $2,094,499, or $.97 per share, in the same period of 1938.

But Mr. Weir, altruist that he is, is concerned with the plight of his competitors, and consequently he is anxious that they should all get together and raise prices. I very much hope he is completely unsuccessful. The recent contra-seasonal improvement in steel production to the highest point since last November followed a price war in May which reduced quotations sharply. Is it not likely that cause and effect is at work in this instance, and that if Mr. Weir has his way consumption of steel will be curtailed, and the industry left no better off than it was before? Moreover, there was real justification for the price cuts, especially in sheets, because the continuous rolling mills which so many companies have installed in recent years have made possible a substantial reduction in costs provided that they can be kept working at a high percentage of capacity. It was because of the search for volume by the different producers that the price concessions deplored by Mr. Weir occurred.

Of course, lower steel prices will not be fully effective as a stimulant to industry as a whole unless they are passed on to the ultimate consumers. So far the chief beneficiaries have been the automobile companies, which have been able to cover requirements for their 1940 programs at substantial concessions. We shall know soon if they are willing to pass on the savings to car buyers. If they do so they will make a real contribution to recovery.

I stress this point because I believe that any confidence you and your fellows have gained from political events will soon wilt unless you get an increased demand for your products. But in order to do this it is essential that when you cut costs by the instalment of new machinery you strive for greater volume, and thus for greater employment, by a price policy that will stimulate consumption. Otherwise, however much you may seem to save in wages individually, you will find that collectively you have sacrificed an equivalent amount of purchasing power.

Unemployment is not going to be reduced that way, and now that you have secured the price of confidence from Congress, unemployment, let me remind you again, becomes your peculiar responsibility. My friends and I have been, by and large, supporters of the economic policies of the New Deal, and we greatly regret the recent defeats suffered by those policies. Our immediate concern, however, is to see as many as possible of the ten million unemployed back at work. If you can achieve that, we wish you luck. But, remember, we are from Missouri—and that goes for the voters too.

KEITH HUTCHISON

In the Wind

WORD has just reached here of an "inner circle" conclave held some weeks ago in Berlin at which extensive plans were laid for extending Nazi agitation in the United States. The discussion was based largely on a detailed report furnished by Fritz Wiedemann, German consul general in San Francisco. The chief features of the proposed campaign are to be: (1) creation of a "war scare," with appeals to peace sentiment here; (2) intensification of anti-Semitic agitation; (3) a renewed effort to label Roosevelt and his policies "red." On each issue, it was emphasized, non-Germans must be used as key propagandists, with "every precaution" to conceal any German link.

WCNW, A BROOKLYN radio station, has been broadcasting regular talks by Dr. Harry F. Ward on a program called "Answering Father Coughlin." Now the station reveals that for several weeks a wireless amateur has been "jamming" the broadcast, creating interference that blots out Dr. Ward's voice just after each question is put to him.

ALTHOUGH ONLY the correspondent of the British *Daily Telegraph* picked up the stories, two significant articles appeared recently in the German press. One, printed in *Die Bank,* was a critical analysis of Italian financial weakness. The other, in the military journal *Militär Wochenblatt,* after quoting optimistic Italian comments on Italy's army, asserted: "In the reality of war, when an enemy of equal caliber would have to be reckoned with, these exceedingly optimistic views would be apt to suffer considerable diminutions and surprises."

THE NEW edition of the Bangkok (Siam) guidebook differs in one important respect from its predecessor. The earlier edition had included native conversational phrases which visitors would want to use. For example: *"Chun Rug Ter*—I love you; *Chun Ja Pai Won Nee*—What is your name?; *Ter Suey Mark*—You are very pretty; *Ter Rug Chun Mai*—Do you love me?" The new edition has eliminated these tips.

WHEN ELLIOTT ROOSEVELT broadcast over "Information Please" some weeks ago, he was considerably embarrassed by his inability to recognize a stirring quotation from his mother's column. He explained everything by saying that the papers in his home town, Fort Worth, didn't carry "My Day." To the radio audience the incident ended there, but not to Fort Worth. The Fort Worth *Press* next day carried a front-page story reminding readers that it published Mrs. Roosevelt's column regularly—and that the circulation department listed Elliott Roosevelt as a subscriber.

THE SALEM (Oregon) *Statesman,* published by Governor Charles A. Sprague, recently reported plans to put a plaque in the state capitol honoring ex-Governor Charles H. Martin, Sprague's predecessor. The headline read: "Plague in State House Will Honor Ex-Governor."

[*We invite our readers to submit material for In the Wind —either clippings with source and date or stories that can be clearly authenticated. A prize of $5 will be awarded each month for the best item.*—EDITORS THE NATION.]

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Issues and Men

BY OSWALD GARRISON VILLARD

THE news that Robert Taft has thrown his hat into the ring and is now a full-fledged candidate for the Presidency will not cause a ripple on the Presidential waters. In view of the shortness of his service in public life, it seems almost effrontery for him to take this step. That he has been urged to run by some well-wishers and friends shows to what low estate the Republican Party has fallen. The country is in one of the most serious crises in its history and the world in a worse plight than it has been since the Middle Ages, yet the two men who are claiming the Republican limelight as candidates for the Presidential nomination are the purest novices in our political life. Nothing could indicate more clearly, first, the decay of Republican leadership as a whole and, second, the total absence of any constructive Republican program. District Attorney Dewey may be a very good district attorney, but the fact that he has convicted a leading Tammany politician and a number of racketeers and has broken up some gangs does not seem to me to offer the slightest proof that he has any of the qualities needed in the White House at precisely this time. We do not know how much executive ability he has or what his views are on a single important domestic or foreign issue. To take him would be to leap in the dark.

But he is certainly a much brighter man and a more unusual and interesting character than Robert Taft. Undoubtedly Mr. Taft has the good qualities of his father, the late Chief Justice and former President, but nature did not give him the singularly great charm of his parent. Nor is he an interesting speaker. When I was in Cincinnati last winter soon after the campaign, I met some newspapermen who had reported Mr. Taft's debates with his Democratic rival for the Senatorship. These reporters confirmed previous statements that those joint debates were so dull that listeners walked out at every meeting. The Gridiron Club in Washington was dismayed by the dulness of the speech he made at one of their dinners last winter. Mr. Dewey, on the other hand, scintillated. His words were witty and clever, his manner charming, and he said exactly the sort of thing that the occasion called for. As a result he made a most favorable impression on that distinguished audience of newspapermen and men in political life, whereas Mr. Taft produced the opposite effect. Moreover, a few days later the Senator from Ohio made another address before the Society of American Editors and that was even duller than the one at the Gridiron. It is only fair to add that he has done much better of late, notably in some radio debates with Congressman T. V. Smith. But to think that Mr. Taft could put on a campaign to arouse the interest and enthusiasm of the American people, especially if Mr. Roosevelt should decide to run again, is to expect a miracle, and not many miracles happen in our political life.

In addition, Mr. Taft's record since he became Senator has not been such as to raise him high in people's estimation. He has, for example, denounced extravagance in expenditures and then when presented with an important opportunity to vote against some extravagance, he has just not been there when the roll was called. He appeals to conservatives as an eminently sound man, with no New Deal nonsense about him, but if he has fathered one proposal of a progressive and constructive character, I have yet to hear of it. It is well, I think, to have conservatives in the Senate, provided we have plenty of the other kind—we should have a lot more labor men and women there than we now have—but this isn't the time in the history of the United States for putting Robert Taft in the White House.

Mr. Dewey, it must be admitted, would be a brilliant campaigner if the Republicans should nominate him. His good looks, his fine voice (which once nearly led to his becoming a professional singer), his skill on the platform and ability to key his speech to the audience before him would give the Republicans the type of spellbinder they have sorely lacked of late years. In this respect he would be a tremendous advance over Alf Landon. But the simple fact remains that he has as yet given no evidence whatsoever that he understands what is going on in the world. Again, I find that persons who are giving their time to the problem of maintaining our civil liberties have come to regard some of Mr. Dewey's actions as extremely dangerous in their tendencies. In fact, some of the things that Mr. Dewey and his assistants have been doing have been brought to the attention of the White House. I refer especially to the District Attorney's custom of harboring and guarding in various houses rented by him certain confessed criminals and other persons wanted as witnesses in trials he is conducting. The owner of one of these houses, where a witness thus detained committed suicide, has sued Mr. Dewey for using her house as a "hide-out." Perhaps this suit will bring us additional illumination as to Mr. Dewey's point of view and methods. Meanwhile he has formed a "brain trust" to help him in his candidacy.

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BOOKS *and the* ARTS

THE RETURN TO REASON

BY JACQUES BARZUN

UNDER the pressure of world events symbolized by the words China, Spain, Munich, we have seen within the last decade what the future historian of ideas may well plot as a complete cycle of belief. Just when trust in political and economic contrivance was being shattered by the prolonged depression and spreading fascism, the notion of a universal retreat from reason led many to repudiate intellect and reconcile themselves to matter and force as instruments of salvation. This in turn revived the eternal issue of means and ends, and bred a soberer mood based, for many liberals and revolutionists, on the so-called rediscovery of the past. The latest stage seems to be a spiraling return to reason.

The phrase is of course purely descriptive and implies neither praise nor optimism. One is encouraged to utter it, however, by the publication within the last six months of eight volumes in the new Living Thoughts Library and a meaty tome of Living Philosophies which, originally appearing in *The Nation,* have just been edited with an Introduction by Clifton Fadiman.*

In his presentation, to be sure, Mr. Fadiman paints with his usual fluency and force the darkness of our days. But it is one thing to be accurately aware of the planetary weather and another to be overborne by it. The notable fact is that neither the editor of the symposium nor its participants seem in the least disposed to surrender. More than that, the proposed means of resistance are decidedly humanistic and rational. Art, love, ethics, and religion stand vindicated as both the means and ends of any life worth living; while their devotees, who did not write in concert, significantly comprise such divergent personalities as Franz Boas, Pearl Buck, Stuart Chase, the late Havelock Ellis, E. M. Forster, Harold Laski, Emil Ludwig, Thomas Mann, George Santayana, and Rebecca West. Even Vilhjalmur Stefansson, who prefers primitive life with the Eskimos, does so, not from despair, but because he finds it more profoundly human and civilized than ours.

Similarly, in the eight introductions to the Living Thoughts volumes Silone, Zweig, Rolland, Gide, Dreiser, J. Huxley, and the brothers Mann, all insist upon two things: the contemporaneousness of the past and the permanence of moral ideas in a chaotic world. If by reason or living thought is meant the awareness that a moral purpose and a chaotic world are functions of each other, then these nine books, large and small, though they do not record any sudden change of front in their forty-odd individual authors, do make a mass impression which it is fair to call a return to reason, a return, that is, to the true conditions of the problem. It is a far cry from the mechanical formulas and the appeals to action for its own sake which seduced so many minds in the period of psychological depression.

Comparison with an earlier volume of Living Philosophies, written by different hands* and published in 1931, makes the distinction clear. In that series the majority of writers called themselves determinists. In the new series the word "freedom"—in all its senses—occurs more often and more honorably than any other major term. With its use goes a corresponding shift of emphasis from science to art as the human undertaking par excellence. Science is repeatedly put forward as one of the arts—an instrument, not an oracle. Even the dissenters from this view, like Chase, Hogben, and Ludwig, handsomely admit the fact of creativeness in human affairs. The test of a living idea is consequently much more than that its possessor should be physically alive; it seems again to mean for most of these writers that the idea should take account of the human will and should work for freedom against the obstacles of matter and force.

The political expression of this preference is democracy. Franz Boas no less than Pearl Buck, John Strachey no less than Thomas Mann, sees it as a perhaps unsatisfactory but indispensable means of securing diversity and tolerance for the creation of individual and social goods in the face of the common enemy. The latter receives due notice in all his protean forms of fascism, racialism, imperialism, economic coercion, in short, absolutism of all kinds; but it is not Romains alone who requires goodwill nor Maritain alone who preaches Christianity. The spiritual values, for all these men and women, do not simply emerge from a material chaos; they are chosen, and being chosen must be worked for. The motto, tersely given by E. M. Forster, is: "Behaving creatively under the shadow of the sword."

Coinciding with this renewed expression of faith, the

* The Living Thoughts Library. (Schopenhauer, Thoreau, Montaigne, Tolstoi, Darwin, Rousseau, Nietzsche, Mazzini.) Edited by Alfred O. Mendel. Longmans, Green and Company, $1 Each.

"I Believe. A Series of Intimate Credos." Edited by Clifton Fadiman. Simon and Schuster. $3.75.

* A postscript to their views, mainly unchanged, is printed in the present volume.

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Living Thoughts Library, in its scheme, format, and purpose, appears like a prearranged educational instrument. Since we are no longer to rely on mechanical means to propel us into Utopia but on individual wills directed by living ideas, the question arises: "Whose ideas?" The editor of the series has confined his choice to modern times. Montaigne is the oldest author in the group, and Gide underlines the obvious reason—the useful spectacle of a thinking man in bigoted and violent times. Gide, however, makes the less obvious point that the liberalism which Montaigne founded is anything but a total skepticism or a timid passivity. Indeed, as a comparison of the great names mentioned by the two sets of writers under review clearly shows, the liberal tradition is not only passionate without violence but coherent without system. But how, it has been asked, can one live according to Thoreau and to Mazzini simultaneously—with a dash of Nietzsche and Rousseau thrown in? And if one is not to live by their words, what foolery is this about living ideas which remain in fact dead letters?

The answer is a pragmatic one: behold the agreement among these fifty writers, living and dead, on the fundamental question, "Why live at all?" The words and the details differ but not their heart's desire. This is what Boas means when he says that the data of modern anthropology should not blind us to the permanent values embodied in various societies. True, these values can only be given form by a concurrence, at least partial, on means and symbols; ideas themselves having, as Zweig points out, no tendency. Hence the necessity of democracy as a way of life and of education as a means of extending it. And if democracy implies a greater community of material goods, just as more education means a greater community of mental and spiritual ones, the ways of providing for it will have to be found, once again, by sheer heart-and-brain work.

Yet it seems to the far-from-disinterested observer that one more thing will have to be held in common before the strength and nobility of desire visible in these credos can find even moderate satisfaction. That thing is everywhere latent in these pages but never breaks through, save in John Dewey. I mean a sense of the functional, man-made nature of truth, that sense to which William James gave the much-maligned name of pragmatism. Without it the best human will breeds only more dogmas, the clearest good becomes a formula, and all the perceptions of art and science turn into rigid absolutes for the further enslavement of mankind.

It is much that in so many independent quarters the liberal tradition should find distinguished and valiant defenders, but the problem of how to mold reality to its image can hardly be solved on a more than individual basis until the pragmatic character of ideas is commonly recognized. Ignoring it is once again to confuse living thoughts with books on a shelf and reason with a marble statue. At which point the cycle of disillusionment and despair is bound to begin again.

"Subversive Activity"

WORLD REVOLUTIONARY PROPAGANDA—A CHICAGO STUDY. By Harold D. Lasswell and Dorothy Blumenstock. Alfred A. Knopf. $4.50.

IN THE flood of froth and foam concerning subversive activities in America which fills the daily press, it is refreshing to have this sane study by two distinguished students of propaganda. Mr. Lasswell and Miss Blumenstock confine their researches to Communist propaganda in Chicago between 1930 and 1934. By thus limiting the problem they are able to present a more detailed and scientific analysis than is to be found in more extensive and general treatments of the subject.

Since their investigation covered the first years of the great depression, including periods both before and after the inauguration of a program of relief and recovery, they were able to examine the effect of this program upon the acceptance or rejection of Communist propaganda. The indices upon which they relied were employment figures, changes in the relief-case count, evictions, the amount of work relief, and the average relief expenditure per case. Quarterly periods characterized by increasing unemployment, a rising number of evictions, and declining relief payments were defined as periods of deprivation. When these curves moved in the opposite direction the period was defined as one of indulgence. It is significant that periods of deprivation were associated with a greater acceptance of Communist symbols and slogans, with a sharp falling off during periods of indulgence. "The data of the Chicago case," say the authors, "confirm the proposition that the acceptance of revolutionary radical propaganda varies directly as magnitudes of deprivation."

There is a comprehensive analysis of both the quality and the quantity of symbols used, classified under the familiar Lasswellian headings of identification (Workers of the World Unite!), demand (The Workers Must Fight for the Unemployment Insurance Bill!), and fact (Reforestation Camps Are No Aid to the Unemployed!). The channels through which these slogans were disseminated are described both qualitatively and quantitatively in great detail. They include not only the press (newspapers, magazines, books, leaflets, etc.), the radio and motion picture (not very extensively used), but also mass demonstrations (parades, strikes, protest meetings, etc.) with their songs, chants and cheers, buttons, banners, and red ribbons. During this period (1930-34) the Communists pursued a course more or less independent of the regular labor movement, setting up their own Trade Union Unity League, Unemployed Councils, I. L. D. At the same time they worked more consistently and continuously through sixteen foreign-language federations.

Periods of indulgence were, as has been indicated, periods of restriction for the acceptance of revolutionary slogans. Since Communist propaganda involves the diffusion of an ideology associated with an established state, it encountered

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also the restriction of American nationalism. In so far as the symbols and slogans used appealed in general for support of Russia or against particular grievances in America, the restriction of nationalism was minimal. But when the propaganda involved a general indictment of American institutions, it encountered strong resistance from deep-seated loyalties not easily transferred to the Russian Communist fatherland. Moreover, the autocratic character of Communist Party organization with its fanatical allegiance to the party line as defined by the Russian and New York nabobs—coupled with the iron discipline expected of faithful comrades—ran afoul of the American tradition of individualism.

The results of Communist propaganda in Chicago are not easy to measure. That it had something to do with increasing the militancy and self-confidence of the unemployed and contributed to the liberalization and decentralization of relief seems clear. But that it advanced the cause of communism is doubtful. One significant function of Communist agitation in Chicago was to serve as a "catharsis," that is, the "dissipating of insecurities without significant change in established patterns." By diverting the energies of the more militant workers into political channels it probably reduced the amount of violence and "coercion" against the established order from what might otherwise have been expected. Paradoxically Communist propaganda thus contributed to the stabilization of capitalism and at the same time made it possible for the business men and politicians to divert blame for the depression from themselves to the "subversive" activities of "aliens," red agitators. As the depression deepened, this type of escape rationalization lost ground, "it ceased to be plausible that a few 'agitators' were to blame for the chaos of American economic life." But by the time the Communists stood to gain from the impoverishment of anti-red scapegoat symbols the New Deal cut the ground from under them with its program of relief and recovery. "The wave of optimism induced by President Roosevelt, who presented himself so successfully over the radio and who sponsored many measures of aid to the distressed, contributed to the decline of the Communists. Early in 1933 the party was seriously demoralized in Chicago."

The conclusions reached by the authors in this case study are significant mainly in providing scientific support for common-sense notions concerning the relation between the acceptance of revolutionary propaganda and the accumulation of social tensions arising from economic and social distress. If these conclusions are valid, it is clear that the real allies of radical revolutionary agitators are not liberals and social democrats but reactionaries who seek to dismantle those social services which minimize the insecurities upon which such agitation thrives. An equally important contribution to social scientists is the methodology here outlined for studying the role of revolutionary propaganda in modern society. One can only hope that the same rigorous standards of scientific analysis will soon be applied on a wider scale not only to Communist propaganda but to that of the proto-fascists who under one guise or another foster and promote revolution from the right. Such an investigation, needless to say and with apologies to Mr. Lasswell and Miss Blumenstock for the comparison, are worth a hundred volumes of Dies Committee drivel.

PETER H. ODEGARD

Mrs. Carlyle

JANE WELSH CARLYLE. By Townsend Scudder. The Macmillan Company. $3.50.

WHEN Jane Baillie Welsh, the sprightly belle of Haddington, married Thomas Carlyle, "the stormy sophist with his mouth of thunder," it was quite a comedown for her. Thomas had graduated from the university, done a little teaching, a little translating, a great deal of talking, but only a few intimate friends knew anything about him or felt that he had anything to say to the world which the world should, and some day would, pause to hear. He had the tough energy and moral earnestness of the Scottish Presbyterians, without subscribing to their theological dogmas, and he had dyspepsia, like a rat gnawing at the pit of his stomach, to sharpen his sense of the world's wrongs and give a gloomy twist to his already sardonic sense of humor. Yet Jane Welsh chose him from a crowd of suitors almost all of whom had far brighter worldly prospects and smoother tempers—including even the highly personable Edward Irving, who at that time appeared destined for brilliant and permanent success in the pulpit. And although their married life had its full quota of friction, sparks, and even explosions bordering on tragic misunderstanding, she seems never really to have regretted the choice. "My dear," she would sometimes remark half-seriously to a friend, "if you want a quiet life, never marry a writer of genius"; but, for herself, the last thing on earth she would have wanted was a quiet, stagnant life. A small but energetic bundle of wit and effervescent kindliness, she devoted herself passionately to the profession of fostering her husband's genius by satisfying his material needs, bolstering him with ardent encouragement during the many lean, dark years, and acting as a buffer between him and the hundreds of people who, knowingly or unknowingly, would have interfered with his work. The great and the near-great of her time—Jeffrey, Dickens, Thackeray, Tennyson, Browning, Sterling, Mazzini, and scores of others—visited the Carlyle home first to hear the husband talk, and kept coming back to exchange serious conversation and spirited badinage with the wife. They begged her to write for publication herself, and when the novels of the Brontë sisters, and later those of George Eliot, appeared pseudonymously, many of those who knew Jane's trenchant mind and incisive tongue nodded knowingly in her direction. But she steadfastly maintained that one writer in a household was enough.

Luckily, she was a prolific and delightfully informative letter-writer; the most convincing tribute to her epistolary charm is the fact that everybody saved her letters—even literary celebrities to whom mere facility of expression was a matter of everyday business. And it is from these letters, more than from any other single source, that Mr. Scudder has constructed his warm, admiringly sympathetic portrait. But there is a plethora of other sources, upon all of which he has drawn, and which he lists unobtrusively in an excellent bibliographical appendix. Carlyle himself, who did not realize how deeply he depended on his wife until her sudden, unexpected death, wrote voluminously of her in his memoirs, as well as in his own copious correspondence, and those contemporaries who frequented the parlor at No. 5, Cheyne

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Row, delighted to record in their own journals the exquisite charm and tact, the sharp raillery and practical common sense, of their hostess. Present-day readers will find Jane Welsh Carlyle, as her friends found her, a woman well worth knowing. LOUIS B. SALOMON

Flooded with the Immediate Age

DEAD RECKONING. A BOOK OF POEMS. By Kenneth Fearing. Random House. $1.25.

IF WALT WHITMAN could revisit these glimpses of the moon to discover the poets from whom he had expected "the main things," it is not likely that he would spend many days poring over the Eliot manuscripts reverently preserved at Cambridge, or be moved by Pound's disciples to take ship for Rapallo. He would be more apt to linger in the environs of Chicago, swapping stories with the author of "The People, Yes," or to stop off at Rutherford, New Jersey, to talk about the American scene with Dr. Williams, or to enjoy those pauses in the Baltimore traffic that allowed him to listen to some of Dr. Moore's colloquial sonnets. And it is fairly certain that he would drop anchor for awhile off Manhattan, to view this metropolis (cosmopolis, necropolis?) through the eyes of an insurgent young poet by the name of Kenneth Fearing.

For here is a man who, if he does not share Whitman's faith in the divine average, or his mystic feeling for the cosmos, has made a powerful answer to Walt's demand for a poet who must "flood himself with the immediate age," is aggressively intent on "delivering America . . . from the thin, moribund, and watery but appallingly extensive nuisance of conventional poetry," above all, is convinced that "what American humanity is most in danger of is an overwhelming prosperity, 'business' worldliness, materialism." It is particularly this fear and hatred of the business man's ideal, expressed in repeated angry satires on the success story, that set Fearing's work apart from that of contemporaries no less aware of their time and inclined to be as unconventional in their response to it.

His latest book, like its predecessor ("Angel Arms" I have not read), is a violent attack on violence, an outcry against the clamorous voices of the high-pressure salesman, the insurance agent, the public-relations counselor, the radio announcer advertising wars, whiskeys, crises, and cosmetics with the same smooth-tongued glibness. The authentic noises of the day are caught in the slogans and clichés that crowd the lines. They blare out again in the obtrusive ugliness of the capitals that shout from a dozen pages: HOW DO WE KNOW YOU'RE THE PERSON THAT YOU SAY—CAST, IN THE ORDER OF DISAPPEARANCE—THE TWENTIETH CENTURY COMES BUT ONCE—ARREST THAT MAN. The sense of panic which much of Fearing's verse voices pervades throughout this book. It shows a kind of nervous energy typical of his time and place. The poems have some kinship with the savage grotesqueness that a few Americans have learned from their French confrères, but they are essentially native, closer to Sandburg than to any other writer, but more febrile and turbulent, and by the same token expressive of a younger, more disillusioned generation.

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Note: THE FINE ART OF PROPAGANDA is one of a series of authoritative books on public questions which are being issued in paper binding at 75 cents, in cloth binding at $1.50. MEN MUST ACT by Lewis Mumford and THE NEW WESTERN FRONT by Stuart Chase are in the series. Other titles this fall will be AMERICA'S HOUSE OF LORDS by Harold L. Ickes and BARBARIANS: WITHIN AND WITHOUT by Leonard Woolf.

by Anthony Eden
FOREIGN AFFAIRS

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There is a minimum of music here, and what there is of it is jazz and "blues." Poems in the elegiac key of "Lullaby" are more frequent than in the earlier volume, but for the most part this slim book is made up of feverish notations on current horrors. Nor does Fearing permit himself the vulgar optimism of those poets who fly from the headlines in the morning newspaper to the altar of Marx and the arms of Stalin.

Indeed, the timeliness of these verses is at once their virtue and their flaw. They are so immediately of the moment, witness the final touches in Portrait:

> while all of it is inclosed in excellent tweed, with Mr. Baumer's personal attention to the shoulders and waist
>
> And all of it now roving, chatting amiably through space in a Plymouth 6
>
> with his soul (his own) at peace, soothed by Walter Lippmann, and sustained by Haig & Haig

that it is hard to believe that they will last, and certain that they will become as obscure in their references as a good deal of Villon. Their power derives from the same source. The pity and the terror of this age have more eloquent spokesmen but none more vehement. BABETTE DEUTSCH

The Black Man's Burden

BLACK FOLK: THEN AND NOW. By W. E. Burghardt Du Bois. Henry Holt and Company. $3.50.

DR. DU BOIS has long been pleading for a comprehensive encyclopedia of the Negro. Failing that he has himself written in 383 pages a small encyclopedia. He would not, of course, call it that. It is, rather, an amazingly compact bird's-eye view of the Negro from the very beginning of our historical and anthropological knowledge, bringing his story down to 1939. Naturally in such a limited compass it was impossible for Dr. Du Bois to go deeply into certain striking phases of Negro history. He disclaims any exact scholarship; he merely asserts that the book has been written "with scholarship as good as I am able to command with the time and money at my disposal." More than that, he says: "I do not for a moment doubt that my Negro descent and narrow group culture have in many cases predisposed me to interpret my facts too favorably for my race. . . ." Here we see the mellowing effects of three-score and ten years, for it was precisely this bias which Dr. Du Bois was not willing to admit in his earlier works.

The volume before us is packed with facts, so packed that the general reader will find it impossible to assimilate or remember the long listing of Negro races and tribes, their rise and fall. But as a textbook and a work of reference it will have a place all its own. It is an outline of Negro history to which every student of race and color, outside of Germany, will turn for guidance. No one must think of it, however, merely as a skeleton or an epitome. It is full of facts and figures about conditions in Africa—land, labor, political and social conditions. It embodies most excellent and brutally truthful estimates of the relative worth—or better, wickedness—of the various forms of colonization by the democracies and dictators of today. It tells the same old story of rapine, wholesale murders, broken treaties, and the wiping out of Negro peoples, always under the hypocritical pretense of bringing them civilization and Christianity when the real motive was simply the desire to obtain economic advantages and to reduce cheap native labor to practical serfdom. These things Dr. Du Bois sets forth anew, with amazing restraint of language.

His book teems, however, with pungent, vigorous characterizations such as one always expects in Dr. Du Bois's work. Here, for example, is his judgment of the four hundred years from 1450 to 1850 during which "European civilization carried on a systematic trade in human beings of such proportions that the physical, economic, and moral effects are still plainly to be remarked in the world. . . . It was the day of the greatest expansion of two of the world's most pretentious religions, and of the beginnings of modern organization of industry. In the midst of their advance and uplift, this slave-trade and slavery spread more human misery, inculcated more disrespect for and neglect of humanity, a greater callousness to suffering, and more petty, cruel human hatred than can well be calculated. We must excuse and palliate it, and write history so as to let men forget it; it remains a most inexcusable and despicable blot on modern history."

Yet it was largely on this slave-trade, and the resultant unpaid Negro labor, that England rose to power as a great capitalist nation. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, as Dr. Du Bois points out, 185 Liverpool ships alone carried in a twelve-month period 49,213 slaves—and some of those ships were mere cockleshells, one of but thirty tons. At least ten millions of Negroes were brought to America. "As a result of that trade whole regions were depopulated, whole tribes disappeared; the character of people developed excesses of cruelty instead of the flourishing arts of peace. . . . It was a rape of a continent to an extent seldom if ever paralleled in ancient or modern times." Dr. Du Bois attributes "the knell of the slave trade" to the "red revolt of Haiti." But there, I think, our author errs. Haiti was only one factor in arousing the conscience of England. More powerful was the realization of the British trader, merchant, and colonizer that the slave system was bad business, wasteful, inefficient, extravagant in its costs and its destruction of human material. When the profits began to dwindle, philanthropy and humanitarianism came into their own, with economists like Cairnes setting forth the destructive economic character of slavery itself.

But what of today? Knowing Dr. Du Bois's advanced views one turns quickly to the last chapter on The Future of World Democracy for his statement of the situation at this moment and his forecast; he usually looks below the surface and writes clearly and fearlessly about what he sees. He feels that England and France will probably let Germany get some colonies "in return for a restoration of peaceful world conditions which will allow industry to organize for further profit in Africa and Asia." He does not foresee any immediate rising of the colored peoples against the whites or any turning of the 250,000 trained black troops with which Europe holds Africa against the 10,000 white troops which stand behind them. Nor does he look for any immediate change toward an altruistic treatment of the Negro. In fact, while he questions how far democratic government is going

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to be possible in a world supported in larger and larger degree by African products "and governed by the industrial caste which owns Africa," he merely falls back upon his belief that the stranglehold of monopoly upon industrial life everywhere must be broken. In other words, he leaves the fate of Africa and the African Negro to the slow working out of the industrial and political revolution of which we are a suffering part. I am sorry that he ends on this discouraged and quiet note. With not too much knowledge to substantiate it, I have a distinct feeling that the colonial system nears its end; that in South Africa the white man is losing ground and that the horrible new exploitation of Africans, to build up, as France and Italy are doing, huge black armies to fight the economic power-policy wars of Europe in Europe, will bring before too long a dreadful revenge.

OSWALD GARRISON VILLARD

Shorter Notices

STAR SPANGLED VIRGIN. By DuBose Heyward. Farrar and Rinehart. $2.

Like Frances Newman's "Hard-Boiled Virgin," this novel belies its flamboyant title. More or less comic-opera in manner but serious in theme, it depicts New Deal reconstruction in St. Croix, one of the Virgin Islands which the United States bought from Denmark in 1917, thereby acquiring "one big poorhouse." Mr. Heyward makes his natives speak a rather Octavus Roy Cohen brand of English, which he admits is not their authentic dialect, but he vouches for the verisimilitude of the principal episodes, which include a native production of "H. M. S. Pinafore," a boisterous parade in protest against matrimony, and the beginning of a homesteading project under the auspices of that munificent demi-god known to the islanders as "Noodeal." In spite of its farcical incidents, the story shows a warm sympathy for the islanders, an independent, easy-going, good-natured race who did not ask for relief rations in the first place, even looked on them with a good deal of incredulity, but shortly came to take them for granted and fell into such slothful habits that they felt grievously misused when asked to go to work again. The implications obviously extend far beyond the West Indies in a northwesterly direction, but they are so unobtrusive that they never overshadow the human and entertaining story of Adam and Rhoda and their doubly illegitimate assortment of children.

SEVENTY TIMES SEVEN. By John Sanford. Alfred A. Knopf. $2.

Even if you are calloused to novels about tyrannical farmers who drive their sordid families to madness and death, this story of black hate and brutality ought to make your insides crawl. And if you want to know to what extent the law allows you to stand by and let a fellow-human being die when, without the least inconvenience to yourself, you might save him—here is your handbook. Aaron Platt, soured beyond humanity by his cruel father, scornful neighbors, sexual frustration, syphilis, and sundry minor inconveniences, goes to his barn one bitterly cold morning and finds his old acquaintance Tom Paulhan lying half-frozen. Now, Paulhan

IMMORAL—OR IMMORTAL?

The literary and critical world has been quick to deplore the recent banning of the French film, "Harvest," by the New York censors. Jean Giono's sensitive and realistic novel is being widely acclaimed as another masterpiece from one of France's major pens. The film—a faithful adaptation—is perhaps its own best defense, as these reviews suggest:

"... *a masterpiece ... an enduring work of art.*" —NEW YORK TIMES

"... *an exceptional picture ... has a remarkable spiritual depth of feeling....*" —THE NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW

"*A ban that must be rescinded ... the intelligent movie-going public cannot afford to miss a picture of such elemental and profound truth.*" —NEW YORK POST

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has wandered prodigally over the earth living on the sweets of life without paying; in fact, has got for nothing everything that Platt has tried so hard to find and has missed. So, after signifying his disapproval of everything Paulhan stands for by kicking him in the mouth and twisting his arm, Platt goes on about his farm chores and leaves the wanderer to die slowly of cold and hunger. He goes back from time to time during the next few days to listen savagely to the dying man's delirious reminiscences, and altogether rather enjoys watching him die. Though he later tells the coroner's jury every sordid detail of this and of the rest of his life, the state prosecutor finds him legally innocent of crime. True, a mob of neighbors roughs Platt up a little, but in comparison with what has gone on in the rest of the book their treatment seems like good-natured horseplay. The story is told partly by means of Platt's testimony at the inquest, partly through Paulhan's somewhat impressionistic and often poetic raving. Oddly enough, the very loathsomeness of the book, if you have the stomach for it, holds you from one bitter page to the next. But be sure you have the stomach for it.

SEQUENCE ON VIOLENCE. By Harry Roskolenko. Signal Publishers. $1.50.

Mr. Roskolenko would not be distinguished from several score other young poets by the comment that he has gone to school to the reigning masters—and to Auden rather longer than to the rest—and that his poetry consists almost exclusively of images of war. What distinguishes him is that he has been an uncommonly apt pupil, and that he is about ready to graduate. His assets are brilliance of image, a stern music, and an ability to make the parts of the poem coalesce. The chief fault is monotony, which manifests itself both in technique and in subject matter. Mr. Roskolenko attempts to maintain too high a tension, to give a knockout punch with every image. Eloquent silences and understatement are devices that he has not yet mastered. "Sequence on Violence" is longish for a first volume; and very few of the poems omit mention of bombs and broken bodies. Such iteration is not the most effective treatment of war for the moralist, and it is even more restricting to the poetic sensibility. But Mr. Roskolenko seems to be an intelligent man, and there are indications even in this book that his ear is capable of receiving other vibrations than those released by high explosives.

FILMS

"THE OLD MAID," on her journey out of the story by Edith Wharton via Broadway—picking up as Zoe Akins's play an undeserved Pulitzer prize—has arrived at the station where the final killing of a character is usually accomplished. This time, however, the process seems to have been reversed. In the Warner Brothers' version "The Old Maid" is more alive than ever. The reason has a name—Bette Davis. It is her picture.

The film is almost no film at all. It is merely a photographed fiction plot, plus melodramatic scenes in stage fashion which are out of balance with the whole. No attempt has been made to visualize the story as cinema. No attempt has been made to dust off the dated Victorian conflict of a sensitive woman who instead of confessing her "sin" acts the spinster aunt to her illegitimate child. The central theme is delayed by the complications of the plot, all fully recorded: (1) The lover did not really love Charlotte. (2) He loved her sister Delia, who, untrue to her promise, married another man because he was rich. (3) The unhappy lover of Delia merely consoled himself with Charlotte before going off to die in the Civil War. (4) Charlotte establishes a home for war orphans, one of whom, a girl, has her special love. (5) The brother of her sister's husband, to whom she becomes engaged, objects to the foundling home. (6) Pressed to give it up, Charlotte confesses to her sister two minutes before her wedding that the beloved child is her own. (7) Delia realizes that the child's father is the dead man whom she loved and still loves. (8) She runs to the bridegroom and tells him that he cannot marry Charlotte because she is frightfully ill (T. B.?). No wedding. (9) Delia's husband falls from a horse and dies.

In this way all the men are eliminated and the real story finally begins. Delia takes her sister and her child into her house. She plays the mother to the "foundling," who she feels is "really her child," and wins its affection by being lenient while "Aunt Charlotte" becomes more and more strict. From there on the story has force and suspense; the characterization of the two sisters is excellent. Delia adopts the grown-up girl to make her respectable so that she can marry the man she loves (it's the fourth wedding in the picture).

One must often be patient between the scenes which, within the frame of the story, are rich in dramatic truth. But they are worth waiting for. Bette Davis makes the sheerly impossible real. She silences the noisy machinery of the plot. Her metamorphosis from a passionate young girl into a gray-haired unhappy mother who pretends to be a dry spinster is a piece of acting convincing and illuminating in every detail. The whole register of theatrical means is at her disposal; every tone and every gesture say exactly what is meant to be said, yet one never becomes conscious of the methods used. In two or three scenes at the end of the picture the actress reaches the high plane where mere ability to reproduce becomes creative art.

Miriam Hopkins plays the sister, Delia, with all her usual skill, warmth, and cleverness. It is obviously not her fault that the mean streak in Delia is almost invisible—the script (Casey Robinson) and the direction (Edmund Goulding) are trimmed to be "pleasant." Jane Bryan as Tina, the illegitimate girl, steps forward into the front rank of the younger players. Among the male characterizations, which are less important in this picture, we remember Donald Crisp as the humane family doctor.

The picture reveals clearly the compromises at work even in a very ambitious movie undertaking. Many more criticisms of "The Old Maid" would be in order—but I shall go again to see Bette Davis.

I saw six other pictures this week. The remake of "Four Feathers" (Alexander Korda) shows exciting war scenes in perfect technicolor, noble English culture, and barbaric Moors. (Why did Anthony Eden protest only against the

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Abyssinian war?) "Beau Geste" (Paramount) is the trashy Foreign Legion story again in a crude and feeble presentation. "When Tomorrow Comes" (Universal) is a confused Charles Boyer-Irene Dunne vehicle which makes one wish to see Boyer again in an important picture and Irene Dunne as the brilliant comedienne she is. "The Forgotten Woman" (Universal) is an awful concoction which is made somehow interesting by the presence of Sigrid Gurie. It is hard to decide whether her unusual screen personality is genuine or merely a fake impression created by a dilettante who photographs splendidly.

FRANZ HOELLERING

MUSIC

Metropolitan Squeeze Play

THE Metropolitan Opera House is possibly the worst theater in the world for its purpose. It is that because opera at the Metropolitan began as an appendage of American moneyed aristocracy, and because the wealthy men who built it sacrificed its efficiency as a theater to its efficiency as a social arena. In order to provide the number of parterre boxes they wanted they took too much space in front of the proscenium arch and left too little behind; arranging the boxes in a horseshoe they blinded a large number of seats in the balconies. And producing an opera house that was completely satisfactory to themselves as boxholders—that enabled them to see and be seen—they were completely indifferent to the handicaps they imposed on singers who had to strain their voices to make themselves heard in the huge auditorium, the producing forces who had to contend with the deficiencies of the stage, the occupants of the seats on the sides of the balconies who could not see the performances. And indifferent they remained: the plans, beginning in the late twenties, for a new opera house that would better serve the producing forces and the general public were defeated in the end by the old boxholders, who saw no reason for change when they were satisfied.

They were able to force the theater on producing forces and public because they constituted both the Metropolitan Opera and Real Estate Company which owned the building, and the Metropolitan Opera Company which leased the theater from the real-estate company, engaged the artists, and gave the performances—the arrangement being that each stockholder of the real-estate company paid an assessment for the taxes and other charges on the building and had exclusive use of one of the thirty-five parterre boxes which the operating company turned over to the real-estate company as rent. But the financial responsibility for the production of opera, which the boxholders were willing to carry while the seasons earned profits that accumulated into a reserve fund of $1,100,000, they were not willing to carry when, in the early thirties, the seasons showed losses that wiped out this fund. They therefore had the Metropolitan Opera Company, of which they owned the stock, transfer its functions to a new company without stock, the present Metropolitan Opera Association, with several of their group among its directors; and this new company signed new contracts providing for lower fees with the artists and appealed successfully to the public for the $300,000 needed to save "its" opera. By this operation financial responsibility for the opera seasons was transferred to the public, while control was retained by the boxholders; and as a result the performances for which the public contributed $300,000 continued to be given in the Metropolitan Opera House for the benefit of the boxholders.

And now these boxholders are engaged in a similar operation by which they will be relieved of financial responsibility for the theater and retain their privileges at a lower cost. The Metropolitan Opera and Real Estate Company which they own has informed the Metropolitan Opera Association which they control that some of the heirs and executors of the original subscribers have refused to pay their assessments for taxes and other charges, and that a deficit is threatened which may compel the company to sell the building; and to prevent this sale the Metropolitan Opera Association has agreed to buy the building with $1,500,000 which it will ask the public to contribute. This time the public is to save the home of "its" opera; but the truth is less pretty: for fifty years the public has endured the humiliating inconveniences of an opera house constructed solely for the satisfaction of the boxholders, and has endured them because it had to, because it had no choice but to hear opera in the theater in which those who gave it chose to give it; and now, when it no longer has to endure them, when it has assumed financial responsibility for production and must assume responsibility for a theater, and when it is free to put its productions into a new theater—now it is to raise money, not to build this theater, but to fasten on its own neck for another fifty years the humiliating inconveniences of the old one, and to insure that its performances will continue to be given solely for the satisfaction of the boxholders, who will now pay less for their fashionable Monday night subscriptions than they did for taxes.

A new opera house would cost far more than $1,500,000—which Mr. Downes, in the *Times*, contended was out of the question. But it is not out of the question: there must be more people than the writer of a letter to the *Times* a week later who would contribute money for a new opera house but not for the old one—people whom the critic of the *Times* should be rallying to oppose the proposed purchase, instead of trying to make them accept it. The greater sum would take longer, and possibly—it might be argued—too long to raise. But if it is true that the Metropolitan Opera and Realty Company has been brought to consider disposing of the present building only by the failure of some stockholders to pay their assessments, then it will be willing and glad to hold on to the building if this deficit is made up, and the Metropolitan Opera Association need only make up the deficit to assure itself of its present home for the time it will need to build a new one.

"The Metropolitan," argued Mr. Downes from the upholstered comfort of F-15 in the Parquet, "has its atmosphere and traditions." But the occupant of C-15 on the extreme side of the Balcony or of B-15 on the side of the Family Circle would prefer the new opera house's sight lines, acoustics, and ventilation.

B. H. HAGGIN

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Letters to the Editors

Five Collegians in Search of America

[*The following letter is from five college students or recent graduates, between the ages of nineteen and twenty-three, who are making a coast-to-coast automobile tour of the United States to see for themselves what the country looks like. We plan to print other reports from the group in the course of their travels.*]

Dear Sirs: The polite spirit of fellowship which we found in the farm areas between New York and Chicago seemed to grow warmer as we proceeded on our way to the coast. People spoke freely. Despite newspaper talk in the East, Missourians do not regard their Governor Stark as Presidential timber. "He hasn't come out definitely for the New Deal as yet," they told us; and, "First he asked Pendergast for the nomination; then, once elected, stabbed him in the back. No telling what he might do."

If the South is the nation's number one economic problem, after passing through Kansas we don't know what to expect below the Mason and Dixon Line. Ruinous wheat prices and crops laid low by dry, hot weather have brought distress to all; to all, that is, but the Republican politicians who have capitalized on the weather. Farmers repeated to us what they had read in the press or heard from the Republicans: "We need rain or a change in government." Druggists, farmers, and editors told us that New Dealer Huxman had been the best governor in Kansas since the turn of the century. The rain did not come before the 1938 elections. Huxman failed of reelection. No one could explain it, except by calling it an anti-New Deal reaction.

The politicians and editors in Topeka told us that the people would not support Roosevelt for a third term. The people told us otherwise. "Why, the government supports half this state; without the WPA, AAA, and FHA, there'd be a revolution here," was the people's story. Occasionally we heard a different story. Some small farmers bitterly attacked the AAA because, they claimed, they could not afford to work under the allotment system, whereas the large landowner made money by it.

We saw the empty shacks of tenant farmers whom the landowner had driven off the land in order that he might collect the allotment. We heard of "city folk" investing in land just to collect the allotments. In western Kansas we passed mud-covered cars containing whole families and their household goods, headed West from that weather-beaten area. We drove through vast stretches of crops burnt to the ground and realized what the farmers meant when they spoke of the need for the government's farm-relief program. We tried not to be shocked at the desperate attitude of these people, who were fighting nature and big business at the same time.

These men wanted to run their own lives and farms. They told us so in words that had become familiar to us in the cities. In indignant tones they spoke of "the gangsters in Chicago and Kansas City who sell our wheat again and again, even before it is harvested, and then take the profit on each sale out of our pockets." One housewife took a vicious cut at the air as she exclaimed, "My husband sells his wheat for 44 cents and I pay $1.25 for that same wheat in sacks, or $6 for it in loaves of bread."

A formal handwave to the tourist—we soon found out that their fellowship goes deeper than that. These people live in the spirit of tolerance and democracy. Two girls standing behind a stall in a farm market had only this to say about racial and religious prejudices: "On Sunday we go to different churches. On Monday we get together, still good friends." People stoutly maintained that Winrod was a dead issue in Kansas, and that Father Coughlin "was barking up the wrong tree." Yet we found evidence of the old hatreds in signs telling us that the "management reserves the right to refuse service to anyone." A proud citizen of Springfield, Illinois, directed us to the beautiful Lincoln Memorial, but neglected to tell us that less than a mile away were Jim Crow beaches.

When we passed through the large areas of growing crops dotted with incongruous elevators and saw factories surrounded by eight-foot walls of corn, we really began to "feel" the country. From semi-industrial Illinois and St. Louis we passed through the desolate farm lands of Kansas, into the rolling cattle country of Colorado, and over the Rockies, quarantining a sick Midwest from a healthy Coast. The Rockies thrilled us with their scenic beauty, but squalid mining towns, stranded incongruously on the sides of snow-capped peaks, chilled our fervor.

Young people looking for jobs haven't a chance in the Midwest, we soon found out. Hitch-hikers on the rolls of the CCC or NYA told us of futile searches for work, and many frankly admitted that were it not for government aid they might be "criminals." Fewer and fewer young people are going to college.

We talked with young people who had left subsistence farms, "ghost" mining towns, and broken-up homes and were living on the Resident Projects in Atchison, Kansas, and Grand Junction, Colorado, supervised by the National Youth Administration. These projects were one of the few encouraging signs we saw. We stayed with these young people in the homes they had built out of delapidated houses. We talked with them sitting on chairs they had carved and upholstered. We ate the food they had raised, prepared, and cooked. They were living and learning. We too learned. We learned of their changed attitude toward life, and how they were bringing the knowledge gained at these projects back to their homes and farms. Many, we found out, had already left the farm projects to take positions in private employment.

JOSEPH WERSHBA
MEL FISKE
GEORGE WHITMAN
HELEN ROSOVSKY
LILLIAN ROSOVSKY

En Route to Los Angeles, August 1

Doubts on Texas

Dear Sirs: Mr. Munz's article on Texas in your issue of July 15 was, it seems to me, a bit on the lyrical side. I feel that some of his facts and conclusions are misleading.

1. "The Ku Klux Klan has fallen into consumptive invalidism." I submit (a) the big neon cross that blazes every Thursday night for the Klan meetings in San Antonio, a Catholic stronghold; (b) the newspaper advertisement inviting "visiting Klansmen"; and (c) the burning cross planted in a Houston

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Negro's yard when he announced for the schoolboard.

2. "Farley or Murphy could carry the Southwest with ease, for anti-Catholic feeling has declined." He offers no evidence. The Catholic question is too complex for the limits of a letter, but I fear that what Mr. Munz interprets as such a "decline" is really the increased political and economic power of the church. Furthermore, you may recall that Al Smith failed to carry even San Antonio. Maybe Texas would vote to put a Catholic in the White House. I doubt it.

3. ". . . a Jewish candidate could carry the Southwest." It might be the better part of political valor not to try it. Unlike Mr. Munz, I find anti-Semitism increasing. I find even Catholic Action publications, bearing the Archbishop's blessing, full of attacks on Jews, and of course, on Masons and Communists. These evidences of intolerance in a group that may well become the first target of intolerant violence seem to point in a direction other than that indicated by Mr. Munz.

4. Mr. Munz slurs two vital issues—excessive freight rates and absentee ownership. The latter is too obvious to discuss. The former gets a little more argument from the poor downtrodden railroads which have long held Texas in a vise. I submit merely (a) the report of a Texas citrus-fruit growers' association showing that while the 1938-39 crop was 24 per cent greater than the year preceding, the growers got 32 per cent less, and that the growers got only 9 cents of the consumer's dollar spent for citrus fruit whereas the railroads got 32 cents; (b) the powerful railroad lobby; (c) the railroads' efforts to block development of Texas deepwater ports. Here's a hint for the New Deal: do something about freight rates and you'll win a lot of Texas votes.

5. Mr. Munz finds Texas farmers generally tolerant of New Deal agricultural policies. He says further that Texas "escaped a part of the 1937-38 decline." Now, as a matter of fact, the total farm income and the total livestock income were both lower in 1938 than in 1937, in spite of increased government benefits. Sales of cattle did increase, but there was drought, there were higher prices, there was beef shortage. Income from hogs, sheep, lambs, wool, milk was less in 1938 than in 1937.

The total value of crop production in 1937 was $512,614,000; in 1938 it dropped to $390,148,000. Both figures include government benefits, $36,010,000 in 1937, and $66,748,000 in 1938.

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There were two main causes for this drop—and neither was live-stock growing. They were wholesale cotton-acreage curtailment and the drop in farm-produce prices. Three other major crops—corn, oats, rice—showed increases, but the cash return was lower in each case than in 1937.

Cotton production dropped from 5,154,000 bales in 1937 to 3,125,000 bales in 1938. That is most of your "crop decrease." The saddest part is that total return to growers from lint cotton was $129,688,000 in 1938, against $217,490,000 in 1937, not counting government benefits. Just what is there in this picture to make the farmer happy? Or tolerant with New Deal farm policy?

All this means that the farmer's purchasing power has been cut. The reduced buying power spreads, furthermore, to share-croppers, pickers, truckers, seed and oil mills, ginners, dock workers, and others whose income depends directly on the size of the crop. Under crop curtailment as worked out for cotton in Texas, there seems to be less money in circulation, in spite of pump-priming, among the rural population. Assuming that Mr. Munz is correct in saying that farmers ordinarily do not make money growing cotton, may we not ask: Are they making money by *not* growing cotton? The government crop checks are important, but not important enough to make the farmer forget that they are only a sop and that they can be withdrawn at any time.

Texas today cries for industrialization. The gap between the prices of cotton in the bale and in the form of jeans, between those of cattle on the hoof and on the platter, is being sharply attacked. The industrializers have powerful slogans: Build Texas factories; use Texas raw materials for making Texas products with Texas labor. Texas has already built its first paper mill to use Southern slash pine.

Texans feel, with or without justification, that if a Texan, understanding Texas problems, were to become President, such a program would be accelerated, that there would be a boom in Texas. That, and not local pride, is why they might vote for Garner.

Mr. Munz is, in addition, I believe, a little too optimistic in regarding Maury Maverick's election as more than a local victory. Maverick has not yet carried Texas. San Antonio is but a drop in the Texas vote bucket.

J. H. PLENN

San Antonio, Tex., August 2

The Fruits of Economy

Dear Sirs: Measures of economy are bearing fruit. Congress saved $50,000,000 by reducing the President's request for $150,000,000 to continue relief and WPA. Faced with smaller appropriations various states have already begun to cut relief rolls and pare WPA lists. When the legislature of the state of Washington met last spring in Olympia, an "economy budget" for relief was passed in spite of the huge lay-offs in WPA since November and the fact that more were to be removed from the rolls. The relief crisis became so acute that thousands faced starvation all over the state. On April 1 the Welfare Board of Pierce County was forced to remove 1,700 persons from its relief rolls; King County made cuts affecting 20,000 persons. Several welfare offices are not taking any more Aid to Dependent Children cases; no more old-age pensions are being granted. In April the allowance in King County for single persons who managed to get on relief was 9 cents a day. It is now 18 cents a day. An unmarried woman on relief rations herself to a can of soup and three slices of bread per day. A recent state ruling is that the ability to work be considered a resource; thus the able-bodied individual is ineligible for any amount of relief.

In April there was an outcropping of "hunger camps," six of them in various sections. These camps were established as a protest by the Workers' Alliance, the bargaining agent for WPA workers, and were filled with people cut off relief and WPA as a result of economy appropriations passed by the legislature last January. These camps are now being disbanded, not because the needy people have been cared for, but because their continuance would prove too great a burden on local grocerymen and butchers, whose generosity was the sole support of the hunger camps.

During the past month everyone receiving old-age pensions opened a large, official envelope which contained a paper asking the recipient to state under his signature that he had read the recently enacted law forbidding owners to sell or otherwise dispose of their property. This law was passed to enable the state to sell the property and collect the amount its owner had received in pension payments. It is true that the property will not be sold during the lifetime of the pensioner, his widow, or dependents, but the property is tied up so that the owner cannot benefit from an advantageous sale.

Washington probably illustrates what would happen if administration of relief were turned back to the states. Relief is a national problem, and economy appropriations are a national shame.

CLAUDIA GAVRILOVA

Puyallup, Wash., July 25

Material on Bishop Paddock

Dear Sirs: May I appeal through you to acquaintances of the late Bishop Robert L. Paddock, recently chairman of the American Friends of Spanish Democracy, for letters, anecdotes, or comments on his work that might be of help to me in writing his biography? They may be sent to me at 157 Montague Street, Brooklyn, with indication as to whether or not they need be returned. His own letters will be especially appreciated.

BRADFORD YOUNG

Brooklyn, N. Y., July 20

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